

Materiality of Writing in Early Mesopotamia

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Materiale Textkulturen

Schriftenreihe des Sonderforschungsbereichs 933

Herausgegeben von
Ludger Lieb

Wissenschaftlicher Beirat:
Jan Christian Gertz, Markus Hilgert, Hanna Liss, Bernd
Schneidmüller, Melanie Trede und Christian Witschel

Band 13

Materiality of Writing in Early Mesopotamia

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DE GRUYTER

ISBN 978-3-11-045962-3
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-045963-0
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-045982-1
ISSN 2198-6932



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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

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Einbandabbildung: Old Sumerian clay tablet from the period of the reign of IriKagina (c. 2340 BC);

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Druck und Bindung: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen

☺ Gedruckt auf säurefreiem Papier

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

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Thomas E. Balke and Christina Tsouparopoulou

Introduction

This volume represents the results of the colloquium ‘Materiality of Writing in 3rd Millennium Mesopotamia’ which took place at the International Academic Forum Heidelberg on the 17th and 18th May 2013. The colloquium was organized in the context of the Collaborative Research Center 933 “Material Text Cultures – Materiality and Presence of Writing in Non-Typographic Societies” by the sub-project C01 “Materiality and Presence of Writing in the discourse of power in ancient Mesopotamia between 2500 and 1800 BC”. Scholars from various fields in Ancient Near Eastern Studies were invited to participate. The very intense and highly productive exchange which unfolded yielded the inspirational stimulus and synergy effect for the research fields Ancient Eastern Philology (Assyriology) and Near Eastern Archaeology in general as well as for the sub-project C01 in particular.

Prime object of the colloquium was to present the Ancient Mesopotamian research area, i.e. the cultural landscape embedded between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, in its entire material spectrum in the light of surviving cultural studies approaches for the immanent relevance of materiality and the presence of writing. The often-neglected yet essential relation between an inscribed artefact and its material character as well as the predominantly power-discursive content of the inscribed texts were prioritized.

The materiality of writing (as an act) and the materiality of text (as an artefact) lie at the focus of the Collaborative Research Center 933, which was established at Heidelberg University in 2011. Such a philosophical interest in the materiality of the written is not new,¹ although no one has studied it from a historical perspective. For example, Mesopotamian philosophical thought has been considered something of a void when related to later philosophical inquiries of the Greeks and Romans.² No modern-day scholar, apart from some contributions by Gebhard J. Selz,³ has touched upon the early Mesopotamian engagement with ontological considerations of materiality or of the relationships between humans and the material world, the prominence of text and the affordance of the written support, or even with the issue of ontology

This article emerged from the Heidelberg Collaborative Research Center 933 “Material Text Cultures. Materiality and Presence of Writing in Non-Typographic Societies”. The CRC 933 is financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

1 Foucault 1973.

2 Goody 2012. For a new intriguing approach to the epistemological subsystems of Mesopotamian thought see now van de Mieroop, 2015 who gives an encompassing overview about the intellectual history of the Ancient Near East. However, the authors have not had the chance of including it in this discussion.

3 E.g. Selz 2007.

in general. Henri Frankfort has dealt etically with theoretical issues of the Mesopotamian thought,⁴ and other scholars have dealt with the theoretical reflections, which are usually concealed in commentaries to various corpora of texts.⁵ On an epistemological level one can look at the engagement with the material world in ancient Mesopotamia on many different levels—from philosophy and mathematics (Selz; Damerow), to art history (Winter, Bahrani) and archaeology (Bernbeck; Pollock). The engagement of Mesopotamians with the material world is more evident in taxonomies, such as the Lexical Lists, with which they ordered their world by classifying, categorizing and hierarchizing objects, positions, and functions.⁶ The principles of classification underlying such lists, initially established for administration, formed the basis for the later Babylonian mathematics, religion, politics, literature and art. The equation of natural and social objects and phenomena was also prominent in their thought.

On the basis of Gumbrecht's *concept of presence (Präsenzbegriff)*,⁷ the principle of recognition of the prominence of a written text in combination with the specific affordance associated with inscribed media offers an entirely different starting point and enables one to approach the materiality of the written from a different perspective. This is why John M. Russell in his monograph describes the palace of the Assyrian emperor Assurnasirpal II (883–859 BC) with the following words:

Once upon a time, a long time ago, anyone fortunate—or unfortunate—enough to enter the palace of “the king of the world, king of Assyria” would have been surrounded by texts. In the first great Neo-Assyrian palace, the palace of Assurnasirpal II at Kalhu (Nimrud), texts were everywhere. The bull and lion colossi in the major door-ways carried texts. The pavement slabs in those doorways, and in every other doorway, carried texts. Every floor slab in every paved room carried a text. And each one of the hundreds of wall slabs, sculptured and plain, carried a text.⁸

In this specific case, text and its supports materialized the desire to mark royal ownership of the palace; architectural fittings were ‘converted’ into active royal monuments, and texts were seen as the visualization of kingship. Thus we see in this description and in the Neo-Assyrian palace itself a concept of text as a social product of a habitus, with which its producers as social agents negotiated access to power, and eventually their social, political and institutional environment. It is in this palace, in other text-supports, and even in the colours of the stones they chose to inscribe, related mostly to royal ideology and power proclamation/propaganda, that we can find traces of the preoccupation of Mesopotamians with materiality.

⁴ Frankfort 1949; see also Wengrow 1999 and Taylor 2011.

⁵ Lambert 1960; Alster 2005; Frahm 2011.

⁶ Englund/Nissen 1993.

⁷ Gumbrecht 2012.

⁸ Russel 1999, 1.

The contributions incorporated into the volume at hand deal with and trace such and similar developments addressing the large number of writing artefacts witnessed in Mesopotamia since the beginning of the third millennium BC: from seals to the clay tablet in its unique presence and its exceptional material nature and materiality, from alabaster gypsum, basalt, and slate to clay (silt). This takes place within a time frame which ranges from the earliest administrative tools, the calculi (“tokens”) at the end of the 4th millennium BC, the first clearly classifiable law monuments in stone, the corpus of archaic texts from the Early Dynastic I–II period and the lexical texts from Ebla in northern Syria (24th century BC) up to the 2nd millennium BC, namely the early days of the Great Hittite Empire (16th century BC). Special emphasis is placed on (raw) materials used for inscribing tokens as well as identifiable evolutionary changes arising in the course of the evolution of writing in the early days of Mesopotamia, e.g. from the initial exclusive use of clay towards an increasing use of more durable stone—especially darker, more luminescent varieties of stone—as a writing surface. Such an approach is of crucial importance with regard to the extremely large corpus of about 110,000 texts, for it offers the possibility to reject the usual practice of reconstructing one single composite text from a multitude of divergent manuscripts from various temporal and spatial origins. This represents a fundamental reorientation and, as a result, a turning away from the hermeneutical practices prevalent in Ancient Near Eastern Philology for more than a hundred years.

In this connection, the studies gathered in this volume focus on very different groups of writing media with equally divergent materials and/or forms or formats. They attempt to use and apply the textual and anthropological approaches of materiality and presence of writing⁹ to interpret and analyse ancient Mesopotamian artefacts from different perspectives and within most diverse historical contexts. Subsequently, the individual contributions appear in a principally thematic order starting with an article on the precursors of (cuneiform) writing, the calculi (Sauer and Sørenhagen), followed by articles focusing on particular artefacts and/or text groups (Andersson, Balke, Marchesi, Müller-Klieser), others examine inscribed artefacts linked to specific sites or archives and place their palaeographic peculiarities within an overall context of archaeological and philological examinations on the early periods of Mesopotamian history (Lecompte, Evans, Paoletti) or deal with cuneiform writing on metal and their unique presence from a historiographical point of view (Wilhelmi). As a completion of the volume, three essays—provocatively in parts—point out new approaches to existing concepts of materiality (Lau, Tsouparopoulou, Pollock).

In their article, **Kristina Sauer** (Heidelberg) and **Dietrich Sørenhagen** (Constance) deal with the function and the administrative importance of those very calculi

⁹ Hilgert 2010; Meier/Ott/Sauer 2015.

(“tokens”) and counters as well as hollow clay balls and numerical-ideographic clay tablets, which represent a common feature of the early Sumerian material culture of the 4th millennium BC. Those writing and supra-regional administrative tools mark the beginning of a development, which resulted in the institution of writing in ancient Mesopotamia. Sauer and Sørenhagen trace this “information storage”, detectable throughout the entire Near East from Southern Babylonia, North-Western Syria, South-Eastern Anatolia to Khuzestan (Iran) and question its specific role in the formation and development of the earliest writing system witnessed only in Southern Babylonian Uruk as well as its underlying language. Moreover, they put the connections of those objects made of unfired clay, the hollow clay ball with enclosed counters and the pillow-shaped numerical clay tablets or pointed oval seals into the focus of their investigations. They also examine the extent to which common features between tokens and the earliest witnessed ideograms can be proven scientifically or be linked to scratch symbols from Uruk with archaic character shapes. Based on such comparisons, it may be possible to gain a better scientific approach to iconographic visual imagery of archaic sealings as well as to the supra-regional symbolic language of these tokens.

The article of **Jakob Andersson** (Uppsala) deals with dedicatory objects known from Mesopotamia in the period between 2800 BC and 2200 BC donated by private individuals and deposited in sanctuaries. Andersson gives an overview of objects used as votive offerings or dedicatory objects, such as mace-heads, seals, statues, stelae, vases and dedicatory plaques. To this end, he examines not only the specific text-formulae used in “private” inscriptions and their vocabulary (e.g. a-ru “consecrate” vs. sa₁₂-rig, “donate”) by delimiting them from dedicatory inscriptions authored by rulers, but also the donors mentioned therein, their social background and the beneficiaries of the donation. Andersson also addresses the artistic production of such dedicatory objects and focuses on important aspects such as finishing processes or the reuse of inscribed artefacts and their associated accessibility. An aspect specifically significant for ancient Mesopotamia, namely to assign proper names barely distinguishable from personal names to specific dedicatory objects, is also incorporated into his discussion. Furthermore, the article in question pursues possible motivations for private dedications to divinities, primarily taking into account the extension of one’s own life or the life of other family members, but apparently the strengthening of family structures plays a major role as well.

Thomas E. Balke (Heidelberg) deals with the relation between material, text and the associated iconography in the oldest Mesopotamian legal documents or records of purchase of fields witnessed since the Early Dynastic I period (approx. 2900–2700 BC), the so-called “Ancient Kudurrus”. Balke pays particular attention to three singular stone artefacts which have as common feature specific figurative scenes referring to the content of the inscription: (a) the so-called “Blau’s monument”, a composite

artefact consisting of a half-oval plate and an obelisk-like stone, (b) the “Figure aux Plumes” made of limestone and inscribed on both sides, and (c) the stele of Usumgal made of alabaster plaster. Balke focuses on the deliberate choice of the material used, i.e. the stone variety with its specific colour and hardness and its possible relation to the inscription. Having the presence of those archaic legal documents in mind, he also examines the significance embedded iconographically in the symbolic accompanying activity, such as stepping over a wooden masher or horizontally hammering a nail into a wall. Finally, he turns to the outer shape of those artefacts: in the background of Lakoff’s principle of materiality of mental images¹⁰ the two “Blau’s Monuments” as a composite artefact seem to suggest a link between the archaic forms of the cuneiform characters BA “allocate” and KU/DAB₅ “grab, i.e. acquire the payment”. This peculiarity could also be taken as evidence of poor writing and reading skills of the respective addressee.

In his article, **Gianni Marchesi** (Bologna) follows the traces of an especially prestigious group of artefacts, the conical chlorite vessels of the so-called “Intercultural style”, whose figurative depictions—two entwined snakes fighting—often cover the entire surface of the vessel. Although spread throughout the Middle East, from the Euphrates in Mesopotamia over Uzbekistan up to the Indus valley, their workshops were located in the Iranian Kerman province, the ancient Marhashi. The author focuses on a small group of ten vessels found in Mesopotamia proper which bear, in contrast to the large mass, a short inscription in the Sumerian or Akkadian language added secondarily. Marchesi also explores the possible religious functions those dedicatory inscriptions served after their arrival in Mesopotamia and the extent to which potential arrangements of the artefacts as well as their materialization were influenced by that.

In her comprehensive study **Julia Müller-Klieser** (Heidelberg) addresses the so-called eyestones known in Mesopotamia since the 3rd millennium BC, i.e. small jewellery stones grinded into the shape of an eye, primarily made of banded stone (e.g. agate, onyx). She explores the question what particular function can be accredited to these stones, be it inscribed or uninscribed. In doing so, she reflects upon the comparisons between eyestones and dedicatory pearls and focuses on the dispersion of inscribed or uninscribed exemplars of each group. Based on these artefacts, the author examines the specific relation of (dedicatory) inscriptions and (decorative) writing surfaces, whereby a personal value attached to the jewellery stone might result primarily from the combination of an imported exotic stone as a material and only secondarily from the dedicatory inscription applied in individual cases. In the course of her overview, Müller-Klieser also focuses on various aspects of stone as a material, e.g. liter-

¹⁰ Lakoff 1987.

ary testimonies such as the Sumerian epic Lugal-e, the symbolic meanings of specific stone types and, on a cross-cultural level, on the universal concept of look and vision as well as—in a negative sense—the evil eye.

Camille Lecompte (Paris) examines a corpus of approx. 400 archaic cuneiform tablets excavated in the area of the royal cemetery of Ur. They comprise the most important archive of business texts from the Early Dynastic I–II periods (approx. 2900–2600 BC) and exhibit with regard to their formal and textual structure as well as the names of persons listed therein—although insufficiently comprehensible due to numerous haplogogies—obvious echoes to later text corpora from the 3rd millennium BC. Lecompte concentrates on material aspects of clay tablets as a writing surface, such as outer shape, circumference and general physical appearance. Besides, he addresses the inner structure of text inscribed thereon, i.e. the specific arrangement in the form of columns and separating lines as well as the separation of content-related sequences of characters in individual divisions. Above all, the author examines the extent to which these texts, regarding the structure of the text or the arrangement of meaningful cuneiform characters, already show signs of a random character arrangement as usual in the late Uruk period (approx. 3100–2900 BC) or common structural features with younger texts of the Fara period (approx. 2500 BC).

In her contribution **Jean M. Evans** (Munich/Chicago) focuses on the excavation campaigns carried out co-jointly by the University of Chicago and the American Schools of Oriental Research in the area of the Inana temple in ancient Nippur (today commonly referred to as Niffar or Nuffar) in the period from 1953 to 1962. The excavations at the temple precinct of the goddess Inana with approximately 20 stratigraphically successive settlement levels, revealed the longest ever continuously used site in ancient Mesopotamia. In the course of the forthcoming publication of the excavation results, the author focuses on a specific group of inscribed dedicatory objects found in the temple area, e.g. foundation nails and door plaques of the Early Dynastic period (2900–2350 BC). In doing so, Evans explores the question to what extent an apparent absence of writing artefacts in older levels than the VIII is related to the aspect of visibility or “presence” of an object, e.g. in cases of an inscription on the inner side of a vessel generally invisible to the donor. She also puts the important aspect of a secondary use of those dedicatory artefacts, i.e. exceeding their pure use as a building material, taking into account the continuousness of inscription and inscribed object against the background of the existing numerous drill holes in the necks of anthropomorphic statues indicating such a secondary use.

Paola Paoletti (Munich) examines a corpus of lexical texts found in the palace G (24th century BC) in the ancient city of Ebla in northern Syria, a genre of text which has its antecedents in ancient Mesopotamia, as proved by findings in Uruk (approx. 3000 BC), Fara (approx. 2500 BC) and Tell Abu Salabikh (approx. 2600 BC). The total

of around 15,000 excavated texts in Ebla in 1975–1976 constitutes, together with the corpus of ancient Akkadian texts, the earliest known adaptation of cuneiform to a language different than the Sumerian one, while primarily serving as an inventory of signs for learning cuneiform and as a dictionary of the Sumerian language. Based on different ducti, she focuses on distinct palaeographic phases (phase I–II) within the Ebla archive and illustrates her analysis with careful palaeographic observations of specific character shapes of cuneiform used in Ebla, e.g. the common cuneiform characters KA and DU or BĀHAR and EDIN. Paoletti also explores how individual wedges may differ and assigns those divergences to different palaeographic stages of development, leading to basic observations on tablet formats used in the Ebla archive for the genre of the so-called school texts as well as on the standing of writers within the “object-actor”-network these were part of.

While most of the previous articles had their thematic focus in the Mesopotamian Early Dynastic time horizon (approx. 2900–2340 BC), the article of **Lisa Wilhelmi** (Heidelberg) is set in a different timeframe. Wilhelmi focuses on the so-called Anitta-text (CTH1) written in the old Hittite language, the most important text of the Old Hittite era (17th–16th century BC), having recourse to historical events before the Hittite rule in the Central Anatolian city of Hattusa (modern Bogazköy). The text tells the story of the conquest of the city of Kanesh (modern Kültepe) by a certain Pithana, king of Kussara, before covering the acquisitions of his son Anitta in detail. In her analysis, Wilhelmi focuses on the one hand on the text’s history of reception, from which two later copies from the 14th and 13th century BC became public; on the other she explores the ways the text could have become “present” in the archives of Hattusa after a break of multiple generations in historical tradition. Structural peculiarities of the Hittite Anitta-text suggest a genesis or compilation of originally three different textual sources, including a royal inscription on a stone tablet attached to the palace gate of Kanesh. Another issue Wilhelmi discusses is the obvious interest of later Hittite kings on the later Anatolian or northern Syrian history reflected in the reception of the text. She also takes into consideration that the absence of written sources from the period before Hattusili I (approx. 1650 BC) can be attributed less to an actual lack of relevant sources, but rather to the relocation of the capital to Hattusa along with the entire administration.

The final contributions of the volume approach the subject matter from a rather different perspective by focusing on the respective theoretical applicability of concepts of materiality and question the absolute character of conventional research approaches.

For that reason **Daniel Lau** (Berlin) centres his paper on possible applications of the communication theory of the sociologist Niklas Luhmann in Near Eastern Archaeology. Based on the figurative portrayal of the so-called “Stele of the Vultures” of King E’anatum of Lagas (approx. 2400 BC), Lau attempts to examine and evaluate Luh-

mann's Communications model, which is based on the core actants "alter" (= transmitter) and "ego" (= receiver), as a possible alternative method for artefact and text analysis in the field of Near Eastern Archaeology. The author examines the extent to which the "Stele of the Vultures" in its capacity as a significant image and writing medium can be equally seen as an artefact legitimizing sovereignty and as a communication medium in terms of power whose respective textual and iconographic components should be related specifically to the prevailing political situation in southern Mesopotamia.

Christina Tsouparopoulou (Heidelberg) discusses the obvious modern dominance of a mainly textualist approach to the written culture in ancient Mesopotamia, an approach which sees all text-products and the very act of writing as equally sacred. In the course of her article, the author focuses on the materiality of two categories of inscribed artefacts well witnessed in Mesopotamia, attempting a reinterpretation of the conventionally text-specific view of Mesopotamian written artefacts. In particular, this includes inscribed and uninscribed foundation objects as well as royal brick inscriptions "defiled" by dogs. Tsouparopoulou also refers to similar examples from the Middle Ages which prove that inscription and text media are not a self-contained entity per se, but a social network on which "random" prints or marks of non-textual nature can have an altering effect as to the meaning of these artefacts. The importance of an artefact is thus not only gained and conveyed by a prominent inscription and its use as an information medium, but also by further object-immanent attributes.

Susan Pollock (Berlin) focuses on applying an anthropologically defined concept of materiality for the early stages of the evolution of writing in ancient Mesopotamia and the objects/artefacts used as writing media. The author explores the extent to which the interaction between a human actor and a material object dependent on each other can be proven significant in the cultural development of Mesopotamia. In doing so, she focuses on a noticeable change attributed to an extension of materials used for textualisation—from clay as primary material to stone—, for example with regard to the material-related knowledge and the cross-craft interactions between the artisans and craftspeople involved (seal cutters and scribes). Pollock also analyses how a change of the chosen writing medium—from a medium like clay rather limited in its durability and permanence to an extremely permanent and durable one like stone—might on the one hand affect the genre of inscribed texts and on the other bring about a change in presence (Präsenz) of the script-bearing artefact. Due to this the author also reflects on the crucial aspect of active vs. passive literacy of cuneiform among the population. In these premises, it is entirely conceivable that in the case of the seal as a visual and textual medium due to its wide-ranging circulation, its legends could be read and understood by a large proportion of the population.

This volume brings together scholars from different schools of thought, who consider the materiality of the written from distinct angles. Hereby they successfully contribute to a better understanding of Mesopotamian's earliest material and textual culture and its specific implications on other fields of research.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to the speakers of the Collaborative Research Center 933 “Material Text Cultures” Prof. Dr. M. Hilgert and Prof. Dr. L. Lieb and to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, for their help with organising the conference and the accompanying financial support. We would also wish to thank Prof. Dr. P. Miglus for his help with organising the conference. Our thanks also go to the anonymous referees for reviewing many contributions and to the Editorial Team at the CRC 933, mostly Jessica Dreschert and Maximilian Kramer for their help in bringing this volume to completion.

Heidelberg, May 2015

Thomas E. Balke and Christina Tsouparopoulou

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Kristina Sauer* und Dietrich Sürenhagen

Zählmarken, Zeichenträger und Siegelpraxis

Einige Bemerkungen zu vor- und fröhschriftlichen
Verwaltungshilfen in frühsumerischer Zeit

1 Einleitung

Beschriebene Artefakte, Schriftträger,¹ sind Teil der materiellen Kultur, die nach Hans Peter Hahn „fundamentaler Bereich der gesellschaftlichen Lebenswelt“ ist, ohne dabei eine Trennung zwischen materieller und immaterieller Kultur zu implizieren.² Nach Hahn sind die „materiellen Dinge stets aus dem Kontext des Handelns heraus zu verstehen“, dementsprechend erhalten Objekte erst eine Bedeutung, „weil sie mit bestimmten Handlungsweisen verknüpft sind“.³

Die Fähigkeit, Gedanken in Bilder und Symbole zu fassen, lässt sich über Jahrzehntausende zurückverfolgen, obschon die Interpretation der Inhalte und übertragener Gedankenwelten solcher frühen Zeugnisse meist ins Spekulative verläuft.⁴ Anders verhält es sich dagegen mit beschriebenen Artefakten. Die Entstehung von Schrift, im weitesten Sinne als System (dauerhafter) Zeichen/Notationen zum Festhalten von Informationen verstanden,⁵ stellt einen Meilenstein der kognitiven Entwicklung der Menschheit dar.⁶ Schrift und Schriftträger dienen als Instrumente der Gedächtniserweiterung, sie bieten die Möglichkeit Inhalte über Raum und Zeit hinweg zu kommunizieren, wenngleich zur Erschließung von Sinn, Inhalt, ferner auch Sprache beide, sowohl Bild als auch Text, einen Rezipienten,⁷ einen Sachkundigen benötigen, sei es zum unmittelbaren Lesen der übermittelten Information(en) oder aber zur Entzifferung vergangener Schriftsysteme.⁸

* Die hier vorgestellten Forschungsergebnisse sind Teil des Dissertationsprojektes im Rahmen des Mini-Clusters 8.1 „Appropriating Innovations: Entangled Knowledge in Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Eurasia“ des Exzellenzclusters „Asien und Europa im globalen Kontext“ der Universität Heidelberg.

1 Zur Diskussion von Schrift- und Textträgern vgl. Kehnel/Panagiotopoulos 2014.

2 Hahn 2005, 7, 9.

3 Ebd., 138.

4 Vgl. z. B. Conard 2009; McBrearty/Brooks 2000.

5 Vgl. Powell 2013; eine engere Definition von Schrift als reines Mittel der Sprachnotation findet sich dagegen bei Houston 2004, 228.

6 Zur Diskussion der Schriftentstehung mit weiterführender Literatur vgl. Houston 2004, Powell 2013.

7 Zu diesem Begriffe und einer Diskussion der „Bedeutung von Text“ vgl. Reckwitz 2006, ferner auch Hilgert 2010.

8 Houston 2004, 224; Hornbacher/Neumann/Willer 2015, 171f.

Nach Andreas Reckwitz sind es erst diese „Praktiken der Rezeption (und Produktion)“, die „die kulturellen Artefakte zu sozial relevanten Zeichenträgern“ machen.⁹ (Schrift-)Zeichen¹⁰ dienen der Kommunikation mit einem Rezipienten – „wo Schrift ist, ist auch ein Leser“;¹¹ dementsprechend werden Schrift-/Zeichensysteme durch Übereinkunft in der Bedeutungszuweisung gebildet.

Wer schreibt, bedient sich in aller Regel [...] eines kulturell vorgegebenen und konventionalisierten Zeicheninventars sowie der damit verbundenen Praktiken [...].¹²

Kommunikation kann also nur stattfinden, wenn die verwendeten Zeichen gebräuchlich sind, unabhängig davon, ob es sich nun um Schriftzeichen oder andere Symbole handelt. Hierbei ist zunächst irrelevant, ob die (Schrift-)Zeichen tatsächlich phonetische Elemente einer Sprache wiedergeben.¹³ So wird das Symbol – „Rauchen verboten!“ – überall auf der Welt verstanden, unabhängig beispielsweise davon, welche Sprachen und Schriften der Betrachtende beherrscht.¹⁴

Schrift- und Zeichensysteme sind demnach kulturelle Artefakte,¹⁵ welche nicht in der Natur, sondern im menschlichen Geist gründen.¹⁶ Gleichzeitig ist Schrift, bestehend aus Markierungen auf einem materiellen Träger, Teil der materiellen Kultur; Schrift ist auf ihre materielle Basis, ihren Trägerstoff angewiesen, ohne ihn kann Schrift nicht kommunizieren; Schreiben ist immanent materiell.¹⁷ Eine Analyse beschriebener Artefakte als Teil der materiellen Kultur sollte folglich auch die Materialität¹⁸ der Artefakte einschließen. Materialität wird im weitesten Sinne verstanden als die „konkret erfahrbaren physischen Eigenschaften der Artefakte“.¹⁹ Wie Lars Frers ausführt, sind

Dinge [...] durch eine Vielzahl materieller Eigenschaften erfahrbare, sie haben eine Gestalt, eine Masse, eine Oberflächentextur, Elastizität [...]. Die Materialität der Dinge sorgt im Prozess des Umgangs mit ihnen für die spezifische Qualität der Handlungserfahrung; [...] sie [die Dinge] und die [an/mit ihnen] Handelnden konstituieren sich gegenseitig.²⁰

⁹ Reckwitz 2006, 606.

¹⁰ Schriftzeichen werden hier verstanden als „einzelne Symbole [...], aus denen ein Schriftsystem besteht“ (Hornbacher/Neumann/Willer 2015, 169).

¹¹ Powell 2009, 13f.

¹² Ott/Kiyanrad 2015, 160.

¹³ Ebd.; ferner auch Hornbacher/Neumann/Willer 2015, 169.

¹⁴ Powell 2009, 19.

¹⁵ Zur Definition des Begriffes „Artefakt“ vgl. Tsouparopoulou/Meier 2015.

¹⁶ Powell 2009, 11.

¹⁷ Ebd., 13, 18; Piquette/Whitehouse 2013, 1.

¹⁸ Zu einer eingehenden gesellschaftstheoretischen Diskussion des Materialitätsbegriffes vgl. jüngst Karagianni/Schwindt/Tsouparopoulou 2015.

¹⁹ Hilgert 2010, 98f.

²⁰ Frers 2004.

Dementsprechend stellt Materialität auch

eine Form der Untersuchung von Beziehungen dar, die darauf abzielt, zu erforschen, wie analytische Kategorien (z. B. Subjekt/Objekt) oder konkrete Entitäten (z. B. Menschen/Dinge) miteinander interagieren; sei es in Beziehung zueinander oder in sich wechselseitig bedingenden oder spiegelnden Formen, die über die traditionellen Gegensätze und/oder kategorialen Unterscheidungen zwischen dem Materialen, Mentalen, Kulturellen, Sozialen und Natürlichen hinausgehen.²¹

Eine Betrachtung der Materialität von Schriftträgern als Artefakte schließt demzufolge die Fragen nach der Art der Trägerstoffe mit ein, nach ihren Eigenschaften und ihrer Herkunft, ebenso wie nach den mit/an den Artefakten Handelnden, deren Wissen und Fähigkeiten.²²

Im Folgenden werden mehrere schriftaffine Artefaktgruppen aus Westvorderasien unter Berücksichtigung ihrer Verwendung, aber auch im Hinblick auf ihre Herstellung und Handhabung vorgestellt. Solche Zeichenträger fanden während der Mittleren und Späten Uruk-Zeit Verwendung, einer Epoche des mittleren und späten 4. Jahrtausend v. Chr., in welcher die Grundlagen für eine drei Jahrtausende währende, stetigem Wandel und Anpassungen unterzogene Schrift- und Verwaltungstradition geschaffen wurden.

2 Frühe Schrift in Mesopotamien

Gegen 3000 v. Chr. kam in vermutlich mehreren Orten Südbabyloniens gleichzeitig die bisher älteste bekannte Schrift Westvorderasiens zur Anwendung. Bisher wichtigster, da am besten dokumentierter und publizierter Fundort ist die Stadtruine von Warka, das antike Uruk.²³ Die frühesten Texte sind Zeugnisse einer innerörtlichen Verwaltungspraxis. Sie enthalten Informationen über Arbeitskräfte, naturalwirtschaftliche Produkte und handwerkliche Erzeugnisse sowie über die Vertreter der vermutlich hierfür zuständigen Institutionen.²⁴ Geschrieben wurde mit einem Griffel aus Rohr oder Holz auf kissenförmigen Täfelchen aus ungebranntem Ton. Die Schriftzeichen bestehen zum einen aus eingeritzten Ideogrammen, so dass die dahinter stehende Sprache – vermutet wird meist das Sumerische – bisher nicht erschlossen werden

²¹ Karagianni/Schwindt/Tsouparopoulou 2015, 33f.

²² Hilgert 2010, 116.

²³ Sämtliche bisher veröffentlichten Texte der ältesten Schriftstufe wurden hier seit Beginn der dreißiger Jahre des letzten Jahrhunderts gefunden. Auf weitere (aus dem Kunsthandel stammende) Textfunde aus dieser Zeit aus Umma wird in Englund 2004, 141f. Anm. 2 hingewiesen.

²⁴ Einen Überblick über das älteste Textmaterial aus Uruk geben Nissen/Damerow/Englund 1990 und Englund 1998.

konnte. Bei einer weiteren, graphisch deutlich verschiedenen Zeichengruppe handelt es sich um Numerale, die mit dem Griffel oder dem Kopfende eines Rundholzes eingedrückt wurden (Abb. 1).

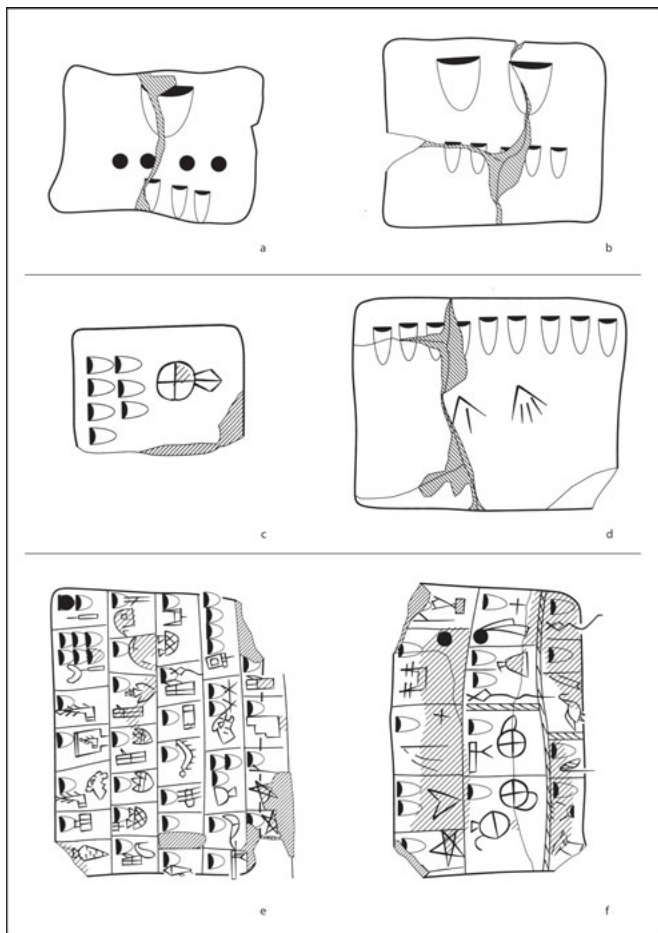


Abb. 1: Numerische (a. b), numerisch-ideographische (c. d) und früheste ideographische Schrifttafeln (e. f) aus Uruk, ca. 3000 v. Chr. (nach Englund 1994).

Die meisten Tafeln – insgesamt mehr als 700 – wurden innerhalb des im Zentrum der Stadt gelegenen Eanna-Bezirks, südöstlich der Urnamma-Zikkurat gefunden und innerhalb einer längeren Abfolge meist als sakral interpretierter Monumentalbauten (archaische Schichten I–V) der archaischen Bauschicht IV a zugeordnet. In der Folge kam es daher auch zu den Bezeichnungen „IV-er Tafeln“ und „IV-er Duktus“, in Abgrenzung zur nächst jüngeren Gruppe der „Ĝamdat Naṣr-“ oder „III-er Tafeln“. Die

Schichtenzuweisungen sind jedoch nicht unproblematisch. Zum einen fanden sich früheste Hinweise auf die materielle Kultur der Ġamdat Naṣr-Zeit bereits im jüngsten Bereich der aus mehreren Bauschichten bestehenden und eher als eigene Periode anzusprechenden „Schicht“ IV a.²⁵ Zum anderen lag der Füllschutt, in dem sich die ältesten Tafeln befanden, über und neben den Mauerresten eines Gebäudes, welches spätestens zur Zeit der älteren Schicht IV b, wahrscheinlicher jedoch bereits zur Zeit der Schicht IV c existiert hatte (Abb. 2).²⁶

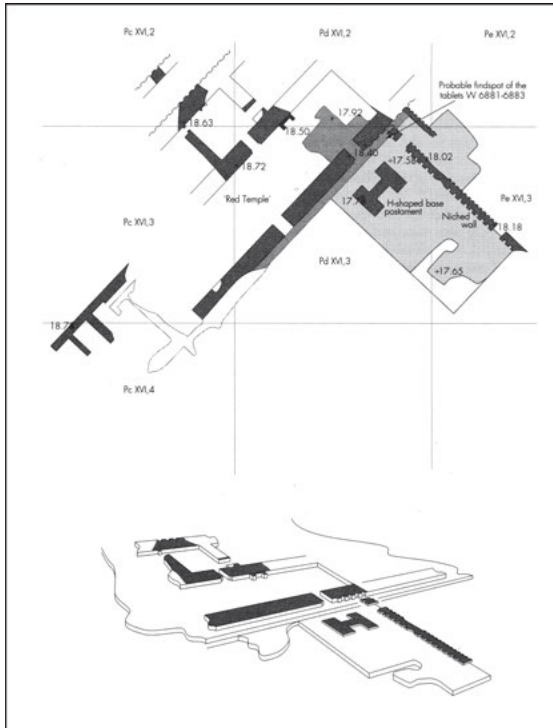


Abb. 2: Fundstellen frühester Schrifttafeln im Bereich des „Roten Tempels“ von Uruk (nach Englund 1998).

Die Abfolge archaischer Schichten setzt sich mit Schicht VI unter dem „Kalksteintempel“ der Schicht V auf weitaus kleinerer Fläche im „Tiefschnitt“, einer 20 m tiefen, bis

²⁵ Sürenhagen 1999, 102f. Die „Unterschichten“ 7–1 von IV a können kaum innerhalb eines so kurzen Gesamtzeitraumes aufeinander gefolgt sein, wie er für die Schichten IV b, IV c und wohl auch V, zur Zeit des „Kalksteintempels“, anzunehmen ist.

²⁶ Zur Diskussion über die Schichtenzuweisung des neben dem „Roten Tempel“ freigelegten Gebäuderestes („H-förmiges Postament“) und das Alter des Planierschutts vgl. hauptsächlich Eichmann 1989, 38f.; Sürenhagen 1999, 42ff., 84ff.; Eichmann 2007, 53ff.

auf den gewachsenen Boden reichenden Sondage, fort. Dort sind in ca. 8 m Tiefe mit Schicht XII die Anfänge der auf die 'Ubaid-Zeit folgenden Uruk-Zeit erreicht, die bis an das Ende von „Schicht“ IV a reichte und heute anhand von Außenvergleichen zuverlässig in drei Abschnitte – Früh-, Mittel- und Späturuk – unterteilt werden kann.²⁷ Der Frühen Uruk-Zeit entsprechen dabei die Schichten XII–IX/VIII, der Mittleren Uruk-Zeit die Schichten VIII/VII–VI c, und dem älteren Abschnitt der Späten Uruk-Zeit die Schichten VI b–a²⁸ des „Tiefschnittes“. Die Abfolge V–IV a ist dementsprechend mit dem jüngeren Abschnitt der späten Uruk-Zeit gleichzusetzen, was möglicherweise die Ĝamdat Našr-Zeit mit einschließt und den Zeitpunkt der Schriftentstehung innerhalb der Abfolge zunächst offen lässt. Während die Frühe Uruk-Zeit eine formative Phase mit teilweise noch 'ubaidischen Zügen darstellt, überwiegen in der Mittleren und Späten Uruk-Zeit Gemeinsamkeiten, die von zahlreichen Innovationen geprägt und auch für die nachfolgende, als altsumerisch oder frühdynastisch bezeichnete Zeit noch von Belang waren. Gemeinsam mit der Ĝamdat Našr-Zeit wird der Zeitraum vom Ende der Frühen Uruk-Zeit bis zum Beginn der Frühdynastisch I-Zeit deshalb an dieser Stelle auch als frühsumerisch bezeichnet. Mit Hilfe von C14-Daten²⁹ kann für die Epoche eine Gesamtdauer von 600 bis 800 Jahren veranschlagt werden. Hierbei entsprechen die Zeiträume zwischen 3700/3600–3400/3300 und 3400/3300–3000 v. Chr. der Mittleren und Späten Uruk-Zeit, während der Beginn der Frühdynastisch I-Zeit, nach dem vermutlich kurzen Zwischenspiel der Ĝamdat Našr-Zeit, zu einem frühen Zeitpunkt des 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr. erfolgte. Mit den Anfängen der Frühen Uruk-Zeit ist dagegen mehr als 1000 Jahre früher, gegen 4000 v. Chr., zu rechnen.

3 Vorschriftliche Techniken der Wirtschaftsverwaltung

Während des jüngeren Abschnittes der frühsumerischen Zeit war es, wie oben gezeigt, erstmals zur Entwicklung eines Schriftsystems zur Festhaltung innerörtlicher Ver-

²⁷ Für den frühen und mittleren Abschnitt der Uruk-Zeit galt die Keramikabfolge des „Tiefschnittes“ über Jahrzehnte als „*master sequence*“, während schichtbestimmte Keramik der Späten Uruk-Zeit sich bis heute nur für die in Schicht VI b fassbaren Anfänge nachweisen lässt. Aus dem Schichtenbereich V–IV a liegt hingegen kaum sicher zuweisbares Material vor; vgl. die Neuvorlage der Keramik aus dem „Tiefschnitt“ und Eanna in Sürenhagen 1986b und 1987, und ihre Auswertung in Sürenhagen 1999, 13ff., 97ff. – Eine Überprüfung der Keramikabfolge im „Tiefschnitt“ auf ihre relativchronologische Relevanz wurde erst durch vergleichende Untersuchungen stratifizierten Materials vorwiegend aus außerbabylonischen Fundorten (Ĥabūba Kabira-Süd, Tall Šaiḥ Hassan, Tall Brak und Susa [acropole I]) möglich, s. Sürenhagen 2014, 166ff.

²⁸ Zur Modifizierung der alten Schichtenbezeichnungen im „Tiefschnitt“ s. Sürenhagen 1986b, 17ff.

²⁹ Wright/Rupley 2001, 90 Abb. 3.3, 120ff. und passim.

waltungsvorgänge gekommen. Seit einiger Zeit hat sich hierzu die Erkenntnis durchgesetzt, dass es sich nicht um eine *ad hoc* Erfindung handelt, sondern dass seine wesentlichen Merkmale

- die Verwendung von Ton als Informationsträger
- unterschiedliche Schreibtechniken (Ritzungen und Eindrücke) für Ideogramme und Numerales
- der logographische Charakter der Ideogramme
- die ausschließliche Verwendung als Verwaltungsinstrument

auf materielle, schreibtechnische und zeichenhafte Vorbilder eines älteren, vorschriftlichen Abschnittes der Späten Uruk-Zeit zurückgehen,³⁰ deren Ursprünge in Innovationen der Mittleren Uruk-Zeit gründen.

In dieser Zeit waren in Westvorderasien, weit über den Bereich von Uruk und Babylonien hinaus, offenbar einheitliche Techniken der Wirtschaftsverwaltung in Gebrauch, denen die Verwendung bestimmter Warenkontrollinstrumente gemeinsam war (Abb. 3). Bei diesen aus ungebranntem Ton hergestellten „Informationsspeichern“ handelt es sich zum einen um Hohlkugeln mit eingeschlossenen Zählmarken, kleine kissenförmige Tafeln und spitzovale Plomben, die als Sicherung einer verknoteten Schnur dienten. Die meisten dieser Gegenstände sind mit Abdrücken von Rollsiegeln versehen, die in dieser Zeit erstmals in Erscheinung treten. Sämtliche Tafeln, mehrere Hohlkugeln und nur sehr wenige Plomben weisen darüber hinaus eingedrückte Numerales oder – weitaus seltener – Abdrücke von Zählmarken auf. Eine kleine Gruppe von Täfelchen enthält neben Numeralen auch ein bis zwei Ideogramme, die sich auf den frühesten Schrifttafeln der nachfolgenden Zeit wiederfinden. Bei der Siegelung von Hohlkugeln fanden deutlich seltener auch Stempelsiegel, z. T. gemeinsam mit Rollsiegeln, Verwendung. Zum anderen wurden mehrere tausend Zählmarken aus ungebranntem und gebranntem Ton gefunden, die überregionale Gemeinsamkeiten hinsichtlich Größe, Formgebung und Innenzeichnung bzw. Applikationen aufweisen.³¹

Der Kernbereich, in dem während des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Zählmarken gemeinsam mit Hohlkugeln, numerischen Tafeln und spitzovalen Plomben Verwendung fanden, erstreckte sich von Südbabylonien über Nordwestsyrien, Südostanatolien,

30 Am ausführlichsten hierzu Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, mit zahlreichen dort zitierten Vorarbeiten; zum neueren Forschungsstand s. insbes. Englund 1998 und 2004.

31 Hauptfundorte von Zählmarken des älteren und jüngeren Typs, Hohlkugeln, numerischen Tafeln und spitzovalen Bullen sind Uruk (Schmandt-Besserat 1988; Boehmer 1999; Englund 1994), Tello (Schmandt-Besserat 1992b), Habuba Kabira Süd/Tall Qannas (Schmandt-Besserat 2014; Schmandt-Besserat 1992b), Gabal Aruda (Schmandt-Besserat 1992b; Van Driel 1982, 1983), Hacinebi Tepe (Stein 2001), Tall Brak (Oates/Oates 1997; Oates 2002), Susa (unstratifiziert aus alten Grabungen: Schmandt-Besserat 1986, 1992b; Amiet 1972. – Susa, acropole I 18–17: Le Brun 1978, 1985, 1990; Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 1989) und Čuga Miš (Alizadeh 1996, 2006).

die nördliche Ġazira und das Osttigrisgebiet bis nach Ĥuzistan.³² Er ist von Netzwerken zahlreicher und in vielen Fällen neu gegründeter Siedlungen geprägt, denen die Merkmale der in Babylonien entstandenen frühsumerischen materiellen Kultur gemeinsam sind. Die Mechanismen, die zur Bildung dieser Netzwerke führten, sind noch weitgehend unbekannt.³³ Östlich des Kernbereiches befinden sich, gewissermaßen als „Außenposten“, vier weitere Orte auf iranischem Gebiet, in denen Hohlkugeln oder numerische Tafeln gefunden wurden.³⁴

3.1 Zählmarken (tokens)

Zählmarken bestehen aus 1–2 cm großen, aus Ton, sehr viel seltener aus Stein oder Fritte³⁵ gefertigten, symbolartigen Gegenständen, die auch als „token“, „calculus“ oder „counter“ bezeichnet werden.³⁶ Rein zahlenmäßig handelt es sich hierbei nur zum geringeren Teil um Innovationen des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr., da der Gebrauch von Zählmarken in Gestalt einfacher stereometrischer Grundformen, die auch im Befund des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. bei weitem überwiegen, sich über mehrere Jahrtausende bis in das akkeramische Neolithikum zurückverfolgen lässt. Das Verbreitungsgebiet solcher „einfachen“ Zählmarken ist beträchtlich; es erstreckte sich von Ostiran über Südostanatolien und den mesopotamischen Raum bis nach Palästina und zur östlichen Mittelmeerküste (Abb. 4).³⁷

Zählmarken der genannten Art werden in der bisher umfangreichsten, von Denise Schmandt-Besserat vorgelegten Untersuchung³⁸ in zwei Hauptgruppen – „plain

32 Die Zahl der gefundenen Zählmarken ist von Ort zu Ort ganz unterschiedlich. Die meisten Exemplare kommen aus Čuĝa Miš (858) und Uruk (776), gefolgt von Susa (678) und Habuba Kabira / Tall Qannas (153). Alle übrigen Orte erbrachten weniger als 100 Zählmarken.

33 Hierzu vgl. u. a. Sürenhagen 1986a; Algaze 1993; Nissen 1995; Stein 2001.

34 Godin Tepe, Tepe Siyalk, Šaĥdad und Tepe Yahya; vgl. Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 1992b; Englund 1998.

35 Die Interpretation von kleinen Steinobjekten als Zählmarken ist nicht unumstritten; s. die kritischen Bemerkungen in Oates/Jasim 1986, 352, zu Befunden aus Tepe Gawra, und Strommenberger/Sürenhagen/Rittig 2014, 309 Anm. 356 (Ĥabūba Kabira-Süd).

36 Der am häufigsten anzutreffende Begriff „token“ wurde allem Anschein nach bereits 1964 von P. Delougaz verwendet (so in Alizadeh 1996, 120 referiert; vgl. auch Delougaz/Kantor 1972, 27) und später, ohne entsprechenden Hinweis, von Schmandt-Besserat übernommen; vgl. hierzu und zum Terminus „calculus“ die forschungsgeschichtliche Darstellung in Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 7f., 9f. Der hier gewählte Begriff „Zählmarke“ findet sich u. W. zuerst bei H. J. Nissen (Nissen 1999, passim).

37 Hierzu grundlegend Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 1992b. Die dort für den gesamten westvorderasiatischen Raum angenommene kontinuierliche Verwendung über mehrere Jahrtausende, bei gleichbleibender Funktion und Bedeutung, ist keineswegs gesichert, s. bereits Oates/Jasim 1986.

38 S. Anm. 37.

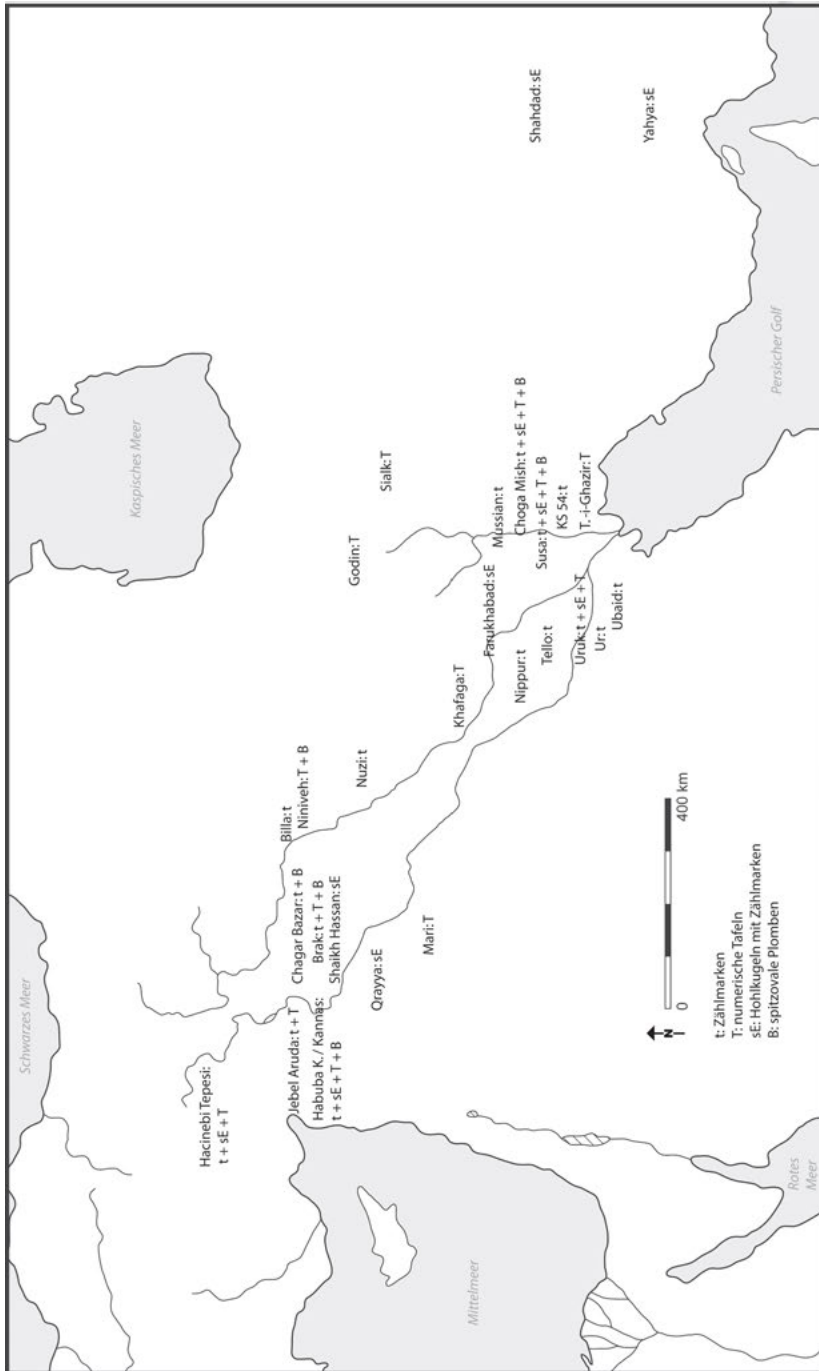


Abb. 3: Verbreitungsgebiet von Zählmarken, Hohlkugeln, numerischen Tafeln und spitzovalen Plomben des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr.

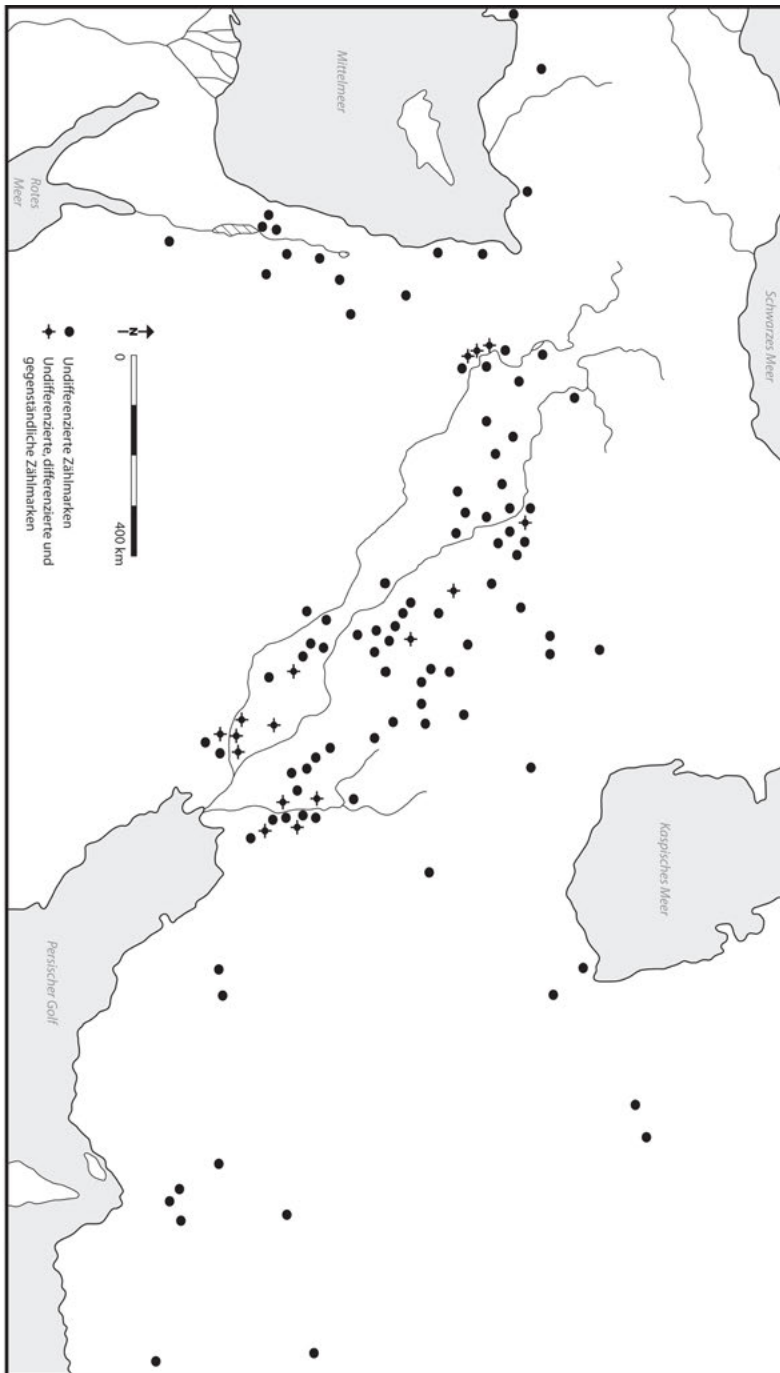


Abb. 4: Verbreitungsgebiet undifferenzierter Zählmarken seit dem akaramischen Neolithikum und Zählmarken des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr.

tokens“ und „complex tokens“ – unterteilt. Die in ihrer Entstehung älteren „plain tokens“ unterscheiden sich von „complex tokens“ dadurch, dass sie lediglich aus stereometrischen Grundformen – Kegel, Kugeln, Scheiben, Zylinder, Pyramiden [„tetrahedrons“], Ovoides, Quader, Dreieckskörper und Doppelkegel – bestehen (Abb. 5a–i). Den Materialangaben nach zu urteilen war ein Großteil, wenn nicht die Mehrzahl solcher Zählmarken aus ungebranntem Ton gefertigt, jedoch scheint im späten 4. Jahrtausend v. Chr. die Zahl der „plain tokens“ aus gebranntem Ton zuzunehmen, von denen einige auch Durchbohrungen aufweisen. Nach Beginn der Späten Uruk-Zeit kommen während der 2. Hälfte des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. drei weitere Grundformen – „paraboloids“, „bent coils“, „ovals/rhomboids“ – und einige „naturalistic forms“ – Gefäße, Geräte/Möbel, Tiere – hinzu (Abb. 5j–o). Außerdem finden jetzt zahlreiche Varianten („subtypes“) der älteren wie jüngeren stereometrischen Grund-

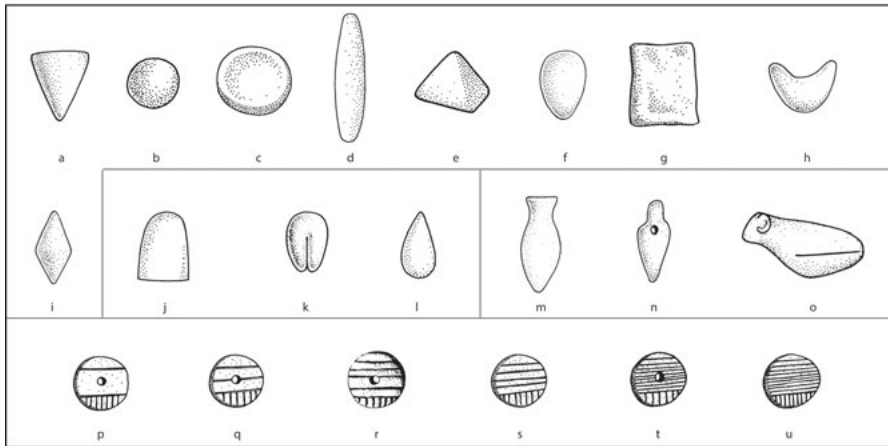


Abb. 5: Undifferenzierte Zählmarken des älteren Typs (a–i); undifferenzierte (j–l), gegenständliche (m–o) und differenzierte (p–u) Zählmarken des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. (nach Schmandt-Besserat 1992a).

formen Verwendung, die mit Innenzeichnungen oder plastischen Appliken versehen sind. Hierbei handelt es sich um „complex tokens“ im engeren Sinne. Von diesen weist eine beträchtliche Anzahl meist zentrale Durchbohrungen wie bei Anhängern oder Amuletten auf, und mehrfach sind Serien von Ritzmustern zu beobachten (Abb. 5p–u). Soweit ersichtlich, waren „complex tokens“ überwiegend, im Falle der „subtypes“ und „naturalistic forms“ möglicherweise ausschließlich aus gebranntem Ton hergestellt.³⁹ Insgesamt ist festzustellen, dass auch während der Späten Uruk-Zeit

³⁹ Den Abschluss bei D. Schmandt-Besserat bilden 18 unkommentierte „Sonderfälle“ (type 16 „miscellaneous“), auf die wohl auch an dieser Stelle nicht näher eingegangen werden muss.

das herkömmliche, aus nur 9 Grundformen bestehende Repertoire an Zählmarken zahlenmäßig bei weitem überwog, jedoch in vergleichsweise kurzer Zeit um mehr als 500 Neuformen und Varianten auf das Fünzigfache erweitert wurde.⁴⁰

Die von Schmandt-Besserat vorgeschlagene Klassifizierung ist, wie sich am Beispiel von Čuĝa Miš⁴¹ zeigen lässt, nicht alternativlos, und sie ist auch nicht widerspruchsfrei,⁴² weshalb in vorliegendem Beitrag von einer Übernahme abgesehen wird. Anstelle einer ersten Hauptgruppe, bestehend aus den im Ursprung älteren „plain tokens“ und einer zweiten jüngeren, in der nicht nur sämtliche mit Innenzeichnungen oder Appliken versehenen Zählmarken, sondern auch die Grundformen des jüngeren Typs und „naturalistic forms“ zur Kategorie der „complex tokens“ zusammengefasst sind, wird hier unabhängig von der Zeitstellung zwischen folgenden drei Kategorien unterschieden:

1. undifferenzierte Zählmarken, die aus älteren und jüngeren stereometrischen Grundformen bestehen;
2. differenzierte Zählmarken aus älteren und jüngeren stereometrischen Grundformen mit Innenzeichnung oder Appliken;
3. gegenständliche Zählmarken, die den „naturalistic forms“ von Schmandt-Besserat entsprechen.

Während sich die Verwendung von Zählmarken der letztgenannten Kategorie anscheinend auf die Späte Uruk-Zeit während des späten 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. beschränkte, sind differenzierte Zählmarken in Einzelfällen bereits sehr viel früher nachweisbar.⁴³ Ihre Existenz während der Mittleren Uruk-Zeit sollte daher nicht von vornherein ausgeschlossen werden. Allerdings ist kaum mit der für die Späte Uruk-Zeit charakteristischen Variantenvielfalt zu rechnen. Dagegen sind undifferenzierte Zählmarken sowohl während der Mittleren als auch der Späten Uruk-Zeit in großer Zahl belegt, wobei gebrannter Ton und Durchlochung eher ein Indiz für die jüngere Zeitstellung zu sein scheinen.

⁴⁰ Vgl. den Katalog in Schmandt-Besserat 1992b, 203ff.

⁴¹ Vgl. die abweichenden Kategorien E und G bei Alizadeh 1996, pl. 134.

⁴² So sind z. B. differenzierte Zählmarken in Einzelfällen bereits für das 5. Jahrtausend v. Chr. nachweisbar; vgl. Oates/Jasim 1986, 356f. Abb. 3, Taf. 1 (Tall Abada). Sie sind damit kein ausschließliches Merkmal des späten 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Auch in formaler Hinsicht scheinen Zweifel erlaubt. So werden z. B. ovoide Zählmarken mit abgesetztem, kalottenförmigen Oberteil („subtype“ 6.14) der Kategorie der „complex tokens“ im engeren Sinne zugeordnet. Angesichts ihrer mutmaßlichen Bedeutung – Kontur und Innenzeichnung stimmen in auffälliger Weise mit dem Logogramm ZATU 393 „Öl“ der frühesten Wirtschaftstexte überein – scheint es sich hier eher um die Wiedergabe von rundbödigen ovoiden „Riemchengebäudeflaschen“ mit knickwandiger Deckelschale (vgl. Sürenhagen 2014, Taf. 16, 48, 49) zu handeln. Die Zählmarke wäre damit der dritten, gegenständlichen Kategorie zuzuordnen.

⁴³ Vgl. Schmandt-Besserat 1992b, 2014.

Insgesamt ist während der 2. Hälfte des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. eine auch zeitlich relevante Zunahme von undifferenzierten wie differenzierten Zählmarken aus gebranntem Ton unverkennbar. Dies zeigen insbesondere die Funde aus der späturukzeitlichen Stadt Ḫabūba Kabīra-Süd und ihrem Verwaltungszentrum Tall Qannas, wo das Verhältnis von ungebrannten zu gebrannten Zählmarken, von denen 95 % perforiert sind, 1:2 (50:103 Stück) beträgt.⁴⁴ In Orten der Mittleren Uruk-Zeit, aus denen bisher ausschließlich undifferenzierte Zählmarken bekannt geworden sind, hat es hingegen den Anschein, dass sämtliche Exemplare aus ungebranntem Ton bestehen. Soweit ihr Kontext ermittelt werden konnte, wird zugleich erkennbar, dass sie dem gleichen Funktionsbereich angehört haben müssen, denn sie waren sämtlich in Hohlkugeln aus ungebranntem Ton eingeschlossen, die auf der Oberfläche Abrollungen von Rollsiegeln aufweisen und, wie im Falle einer Kugel aus Faruḫabad, zusätzlich mit Eindrücken versehen sein konnten.⁴⁵

3.2 Hohlkugeln

Hohlkugeln (Abb. 6a–d) stellen ebenso wie die meisten differenzierten und gegenständlichen Zählmarken eine Innovation der frühsumerischen Zeit dar. Sie waren während der Mittleren und Späten Uruk-Zeit in Gebrauch, lassen sich aber seit Beginn der Schriftverwendung nicht mehr sicher nachweisen.⁴⁶ Eine verwaltungstechnische Funktion dieser Objekte wurde zuerst von Pierre Amiet vermutet, welcher die „*bulles spheriques*“ als Buchhaltungsdokumente zur Kontrolle des Warenein- und -ausgangs interpretierte.⁴⁷ Unterstützt wurde diese These durch den Fund eines ähnlichen Objekts aus Nuzi, einer 49 Zählmarken enthaltenden ovoiden Hohlkugel deutlich jüngeren Datums, welche laut der begleitenden Inschrift die Transaktion von 48 Nutztieren dokumentiert.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Vgl. Anm. 43.

⁴⁵ Wright 1981, 151 fig. 75d; Hohlkugeln der Mittleren Uruk-Zeit wurden zudem in Hacinebi Tepe (Pittman 1996; Stein 2001, 289ff.); Tall Šaiḫ Hassan (Boese 1995, 95f., 104 Abb. 8b–d) und Tall Qrayyah (Shimabuku 1984, 7f. mit fig. 4 [„*clay bullae*“]) gefunden. Mit weiteren Exemplaren aus dieser Zeit ist in Susa (alte Grabungen; vgl. Amiet 1972) und Čuḡa Miš (Alizadeh 1996, 2006) zu rechnen. Leider fehlt es dort an stratigraphischen Angaben, die eine genauere zeitliche Einordnung erlauben würden.

⁴⁶ Die insgesamt 26 in Uruk gefundenen Exemplare stammen aus einem stratigraphisch nicht gesicherten, wahrscheinlich aber älteren Kontext als die schriftführende „Schicht“ IV a; vgl. Boehmer 1999, 104ff., 120f.

⁴⁷ Amiet 1966, 70.

⁴⁸ Oppenheim 1959.

Die Gesamtzahl der bisher publizierten Exemplare beträgt mehr als 220, darunter auch eine größere Zahl von Fragmenten.⁴⁹ Hiervon weisen nur 18 Exemplare Markierungen auf der Außenfläche auf, die in 16 Fällen aus Finger-, Griffel- oder Rundholzeindrücken bestehen und als Numerales gedeutet werden (Abb. 6b).⁵⁰ In den verbleibenden zwei Fällen handelt es sich um Eindrücke von Zählmarken mit logographischer Bedeutung (Abb. 6c).⁵¹ Es hat den Anschein, dass die zwei letztgenannten Kugeln zu den jüngeren, wenn nicht jüngsten Vertretern ihrer Art gehören, da eines von ihnen in Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd gefunden wurde und damit aus sicherem späturukzeitlichen Kontext kommt. Wie auch im Falle von 4 weiteren Kugeln aus Susa, acropole I 18, stimmen in Ḥabūba Anzahl und Form der Eindrücke mit dem Kugelinhalt überein. Dass dies nicht immer der Fall war, konnte Amiet am Beispiel einiger Hohlkugeln mit Finger- oder Griffelindrücken aus Susa zeigen.⁵² Die Außenflächen sämtlicher in regulären Grabungen gefundener Kugeln⁵³ waren flächendeckend mit Abrollungen von bis zu 5 Rollsiegeln versehen. In zwei Fällen⁵⁴ wurde nach erfolgter Siegelung zusätzlich die Basis eines Rollsiegels eingedrückt (Abb. 6d).

Die Hohlkugeln fungierten demnach als Umschläge, doch nur selten konnte der Inhalt der Kugeln ermittelt werden, weil die meisten Exemplare entweder noch intakt – d. h. verschlossen – waren oder bereits im Altertum aufgebrochen und so sehr beschädigt wurden, dass ihr Inhalt verloren ging. Auch tomographische Unter-

49 Eine Zusammenstellung der vor 1992 gefundenen Hohlkugeln findet sich in Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 112ff. mit Tabelle 1. 2. Fundorte mit stratigraphisch gesichertem Kontext sind Hacinebi Tepe, Tall Šaiḥ Hassan, Tall Qrayyah, Tepe Faruḥabad (zu diesen s. Anm. 47), Susa, acropole I (s. Anm. 54) und Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd (Rittig 2014). Die Gesamtzahl der hier gefundenen Hohlkugeln beträgt nur 24 Stück. Eine weitaus größere Anzahl von Kugeln, die sich einer genaueren stratigraphischen Einordnung entziehen, wurde in den alten Grabungen von Susa (78 Exemplare) und in Čuḡa Miš (97 Exemplare) gefunden.

50 10 Kugeln aus Susa, acropole I 18 (Le Brun 1985, 1990; Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 1989), 5 aus den alten Grabungen in Susa (Amiet 1972, Kat. 460 bis, 539, 555, 581+598 [sekundär eingeritzt], 582) und 1 Exemplar aus Čuḡa Miš (Alizadeh 1996, Taf. 36 A–D).

51 Je eine Hohlkugel aus Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd (Rittig 2014, Taf. 204, 2; Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 126 Abb. 74) und den alten Grabungen in Susa (Amiet 1972, Kat. 664+694; Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 124 Abb. 71).

52 Amiet 1987, 331ff. Schmandt-Besserat versuchte, die in mehreren Fällen offensichtlich vorhandenen Diskrepanzen zu marginalisieren. Hiervon ausgenommen blieb nur eine Hohlkugel (Sb 1938 = Amiet 1972, Kat. 582) mit 4 kreuzförmigen Eindrücken und 8 Zählmarken im Inneren, die kurzerhand als atypisch („perhaps had a different meaning altogether“) bezeichnet wurde (Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 127f.). Für eine Erklärung reicht diese Aussage gewiss nicht aus.

53 Die Provenienz zweier Hohlkugeln aus dem Kunsthandel mit den Herkunftsangaben „Dharan“ (Saudi Arabien) und „Dumah“ (Palästina; s. Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 114) bleibt unbestätigt. Die Außenflächen dieser Exemplare weisen keine Siegelabrollungen auf.

54 Susa, alte Grabungen (Amiet 1972, Kat. 680) und acropole I 18 (Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 15, 45 Abb. 3, 3). In beiden Fällen wurde jeweils nur ein Rollsiegel verwendet.

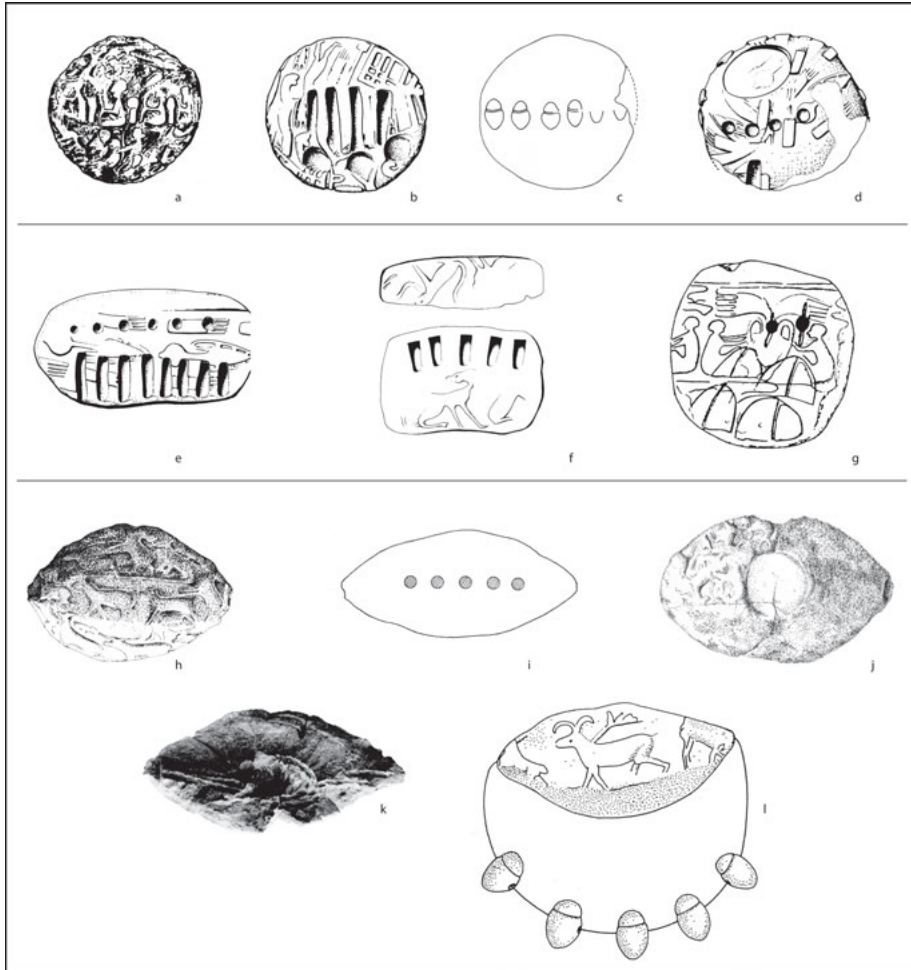


Abb. 6: Gesiegelte Hohlkugeln (a–d) mit Eindrücken von Numeralen (b), Zählmarken (c) und Rollsiegelbasen (d); gesiegelte numerische (e, f) und numerisch-ideographische (g) Tafeln aus vorschrittlicher Zeit; gesiegelte spitzovale Plomben (h–k) mit Eindrücken von Numeralen (i) und Siegelbasen (j); Schnur- und Knotenabdrücke im Inneren von Plomben (k); Schnur mit gegenständlichen Zählmarken und Plombensicherung (l) (Rekonstruktionsvorschlag von Schmandt-Besserat 1992a).

suchungen einiger intakter Kugeln aus Susa, Čuĝa Miš und Uruk⁵⁵ lieferten nur bedingt Aufschlüsse, so dass letztlich Anzahl und Kombinationsmöglichkeiten von Zählmarken in zu vielen Fällen unbekannt bleiben, um sichere Annahmen über eventuelle zeitlich bedingte Veränderungen zu treffen. So muss z. B. offen bleiben, ob die

⁵⁵ Drilhon/Laval-Jeantet/Lahmi 1987; Woods 2012; Damerow/Meinzer 1995.

zu beobachtende unterschiedliche Variationsbreite undifferenzierter Formen nur Ausdruck von Warentransaktionen unterschiedlicher Art und Umfangs ist, oder ob sich darin auch funktionale Veränderungen von zeitlicher Relevanz widerspiegeln. Ferner lässt sich nicht feststellen, ob der Inhalt der Hohlkugeln durchweg aus Objekten aus ungebranntem Ton bestand, wie es für die Mittlere Uruk-Zeit den Anschein hat,⁵⁶ oder ob während der Späten Uruk-Zeit auch gebrannte undifferenzierte Zählmarken Verwendung fanden. Solche Marken wurden z. B. in der späturukzeitlichen Schicht VI b des „Tiefschnittes“ in Uruk, gemeinsam mit einer deutlich kleineren Zahl differenzierter Exemplare, in großen Mengen lose im Schutt gefunden,⁵⁷ lassen sich jedoch, wegen der dort fehlenden Hohlkugeln, nicht als ehemaliger Inhalt solcher Objekte nachweisen.

3.3 Numerische Tafeln

Gemeinsam mit Hohlkugeln treten während der Mittleren Uruk-Zeit als weitere „Informationsspeicher“ sog. numerische Tafeln (Abb. 6e–f) erstmals in Erscheinung.⁵⁸ Es sind kleine kissenförmige Tafeln aus ungebranntem Ton von runder, ovaler oder rechteckiger bis quadratischer Form, deren Oberflächen in unterschiedlicher Weise mit flächendeckenden Siegelabrollungen versehen sein konnten. Im Gegensatz zu den Hohlkugeln sicherer Provenienz waren mehrere Exemplare definitiv ungesiegelt, während eingedrückte Markierungen nun die Regel sind.⁵⁹ Soweit es sich bei diesen Markierungen um Numerale handelt, wurden die Eindrücke in gleicher Weise

⁵⁶ Die Vermutung liegt nahe, ist aber z. Zt. nicht überprüfbar, weil die Angaben in den umfangreichen Katalogen zu Susa, Uruk und Tello (Schmandt-Besserat 1992b) und zu Čuğa Miš (Alizadeh 1996, 2006) für eine präzise Unterscheidung zwischen undifferenzierten Zählmarken aus ungebranntem und gebranntem Ton (Terrakotta) in zahlreichen Fällen unzureichend sind.

⁵⁷ Schmandt-Besserat 1988, 19ff. Es handelt sich hierbei zugleich um den größten Einzelfund (155 Stück) von Zählmarken innerhalb von Uruk.

⁵⁸ Das vermutlich früheste Zeugnis einer numerischen Tafel wurde gemeinsam mit einer Hohlkugel in mittelurukzeitlichen Schichten von Hacinebi Tepe gefunden (Stein 2001, 289ff.). Der fragmentarische Zustand des Objekts – es sind keine Numerale erhalten – verhindert zwar eine endgültige Zuweisung, doch lassen Kissenform und flächendeckende einseitige Siegelung kaum eine andere Deutung zu. Eine weitere Tafel, diesmal ohne Siegelung, kommt aus mittelurukzeitlichen Zusammenhängen in Tall Brak, Sondage CH (Oates 2002, 116 Abb. 6 unten).

⁵⁹ Siegelungen der Vorder- und Rückseite, z. T. mitsamt den Rändern, waren eher die Ausnahme. Am häufigsten finden sich einseitig gesiegelte Tafeln mit und ohne Randsiegelung. Eine Auflistung von Fundorten vor 1998 veröffentlichter numerischer Tafeln (mit Literaturnachweis) findet sich in Englund 1998, 50 Anm. 98. Nachzutragen sind die später publizierten Tafeln aus Čuğa Miš (17 Exemplare; Alizadeh 1996, 129; 2006, Taf. 22) und Ḥabūba Kabira-Süd (12 Exemplare; Rittig 2014, 344ff. Taf. 200ff.).

wie auf Hohlkugeln mit Griffeln oder Rundhölzern vorgenommen.⁶⁰ Die Verwendung von Zählmarken lässt sich nur einmal, auf einer Tafel aus Susa, nachweisen, auf deren Vorderseite sich neben zwei eingestochenen und nachgekerbten Numeralen vier Abdrücke eines Dreiecks mit sekundär eingeritzter Mittellinie befinden.⁶¹ Allem Anschein nach handelt es sich um die Wiedergabe einer differenzierten Zählmarke mit nicht sicher bestimmter Bedeutung.⁶² Für die Siegelungen der Tafeloberflächen wurden bis zu drei verschiedene Rollsiegel verwendet. In einem Falle findet sich, wie schon auf zwei Hohlkugeln (s. o.), zusätzlich der Abdruck einer Rollsiegelbasis.⁶³

3.4 Spitzovale Plomben

Ein viertes Kontrollinstrument vorschrittlicher Wirtschaftsverwaltung bestand aus spitzovalen Plomben aus ungebranntem Ton (Abb. 6h–k), die erstmals zur Zeit der Schicht acropole I 18 in Susa, zu Beginn der Späten Uruk-Zeit, in Erscheinung treten. Insgesamt sind 73 Exemplare aus bisher nur 5 Orten überliefert.⁶⁴ Ihre Außenflächen sind mehr oder weniger deutlich prismatisch abgeflacht und mit Siegelabrollungen versehen. In insgesamt 13 Fällen wurden zwei, in allen übrigen nur ein Siegel verwendet, und nur einmal findet sich zusätzlich der Abdruck einer Rollsiegelbasis (Abb. 6j).⁶⁵ Kleine kreisförmige Eindrücke von Numeralen befinden sich auf zwei Plomben aus Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd (Abb. 6i), und angeblich weisen auch zwei weitere Exemplare aus Susa Numerales auf.⁶⁶ Die Plomben dienten als Sicherung gegen die unbefugte

60 Vgl. die detaillierten Beschreibungen in Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 14f. Die von Schmandt-Besserat angenommene Verwendung von undifferenzierten kegelförmigen Zählmarken (Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 135ff.) lässt sich experimentell mit Hilfe von Rundhölzern unterschiedlicher Stärke und einseitig spitzem Ende leicht widerlegen. Je nach Durchmesser und Anstellwinkel lassen sich hiermit problemlos ebenmäßige kegel- und kreisförmige Eindrücke unterschiedlicher Länge und Stärke erzielen, die mit den in Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 134 Abb. 83 abgebildeten vollkommen übereinstimmen.

61 Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 135 Abb. 85 (= Amiet 1972, Kat. 641). Die gleiche Marke findet sich vollständig, ohne „Nachbesserung“, als Abdruck auf einer massiven Tonkugel unbekannter Funktion aus Susa, acropole I 18 (Le Brun/Vallat 1987, 59 Taf. VI, 7b).

62 „subtype“ 8.11 nach Schmandt-Besserat 1992b, 220; zur „Lesung“ vgl. Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 139 mit Anm. 170.

63 Amiet 1972, Kat. 536. Taf. 67, 536. Die Abrollungen stammen von nur einem Siegel.

64 Dies ist weniger als die Hälfte derjenigen Orte, in denen differenzierte Zählmarken, Hohlkugeln und numerische Tafeln gefunden wurden. Hauptfundorte sind Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd (Rittig 2014, 347ff.), Susa (alte Grabungen: Amiet 1972, Kat. 477+513, 482, 499, 510, 512, 519, 540, 541, 544+649, 547, 567, 585, 599, 644, 665, 688; acropole I 18: Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 20f.; Le Brun 1990, 62 Abb. 1, 1.3; acropole I 17 B2: Le Brun 1978, 76f. Abb. 10) und Čuġa Miš (Alizadeh 1996, 119f.; 2006, 360f. Abb. 76, N). Zwei Plomben aus Nineveh und Tall Brak lassen sich stratigraphisch nicht einordnen und bleiben hier unberücksichtigt.

65 Rittig 2014, Taf. 207, 1 (Bulle 11). Die Abrollungen stammen von nur einem Siegel.

66 Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd: Rittig 2014, Taf. 205, 2 (Bulle 3), 209, 7 (Bulle 26). – Susa, alte Grabungen:

Öffnung von Schnurknoten, deren Abdrücke in einigen Fällen im Inneren von zerbrochenen Plomben sichtbar sind (Abb. 6k). Ob es sich bei den Schnüren um Verschlüsse von Behältern (Beutel, Pakete, Kästen) handelt, lässt sich nicht mit Sicherheit sagen, da sich hierfür auch andere Sicherungstechniken aufzeigen lassen.⁶⁷ In eine ganz andere Richtung weist ein Vorschlag von Schmandt-Besserat, wonach es sich um Sicherungen von Schnüren handelt, auf die durchlochte Zählmarken aus gebranntem Ton aufgezogen waren (Abb. 6l).⁶⁸ Aus unserer Sicht ist dies unwahrscheinlich, weil die Numerales auf den Plomben aus Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd dann überflüssig wären: Das Gezählte, egal ob in Gestalt undifferenzierter oder differenzierter Zählmarken, war durch die Plombe ausreichend gesichert und direkt überprüfbar.⁶⁹

In Tabelle 1 sind Beginn und Laufzeit der vier Fundgattungen nochmals im Überblick dargestellt.

3.5 Zur Funktion der vor- und frühschriftlichen Verwaltungshilfen

Die Zusammenhänge zwischen den zuvor beschriebenen Hilfsmitteln vorschriftlicher Wirtschaftsverwaltung werden in mehrfacher Hinsicht erkennbar. Undifferenzierte Zählmarken stellen den Inhalt von Hohlkugeln dar, die ihrerseits, wegen gleichartiger, mit Griffeln und Rundhölzern eingedrückter Numerales, Verbindungen zu spitzovalen Plomben und numerischen Tafeln aufweisen. Auf Hohlkugeln finden sich außerdem Eindrücke differenzierter Zählmarken, so dass ein doppelter Bezug erkennbar wird. Im Falle der Tafeln ist die Verwendung von Zählmarken zur Herstellung von Numeralesindrücken eher unwahrscheinlich, weil stattdessen Rundhölzer angewendet werden konnten. Die Oberflächen von Plomben, Hohlkugeln und Tafeln waren stets oder mehrheitlich (Tafeln) flächendeckend mit Abrollungen oft mehrerer Siegel überzogen, die vor den Markierungen aufgebracht wurden. Es handelt sich damit in allen drei Fällen um dieselbe Praxis, die auch auf den nachfolgenden ideographischen Tafeln erkennbar ist. Soweit nur ein Rollsiegel benutzt wurde, sind in seltenen Fällen in allen drei Gruppen zusätzlich Abdrücke der Siegelbasis vorgenommen worden. Darüber hinaus werden mehrfach direkte Verbindungen zwischen den Gruppen durch die Verwendung identischer Rollsiegel erkennbar. In Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd ist dies bei einer Tafel und zwei Plomben der Fall, während solche Übereinstimmungen in Susa, acropole I 18, insgesamt neunmal bei Hohlkugeln, Tafeln

Amiet 1972, Kat. 544+649, 599. Die Angaben sind nicht eindeutig.

⁶⁷ Vgl. Rittig 2014, 351ff. zu Sackverschlüssen und zur Funktion von Etiketten, Plättchen und Scheiben.

⁶⁸ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 109f.

⁶⁹ Bevor man sich dieser Interpretation anschließt, sollte unbedingt zuvor geprüft werden, ob Schnurstärke und Lochdurchmesser übereinstimmen. Dies wird nur am Original möglich sein, weil Fotos hierfür nicht ausreichen.

Tab. 1: Fundorte mit Leitstratigraphien der Mittleren und Späten Uruk-Zeit in NW-Syrien, Babylonien und der Susiana.

Habuba-K.-Süd	Šaīḫ Hassan	Braq TW	Uruk-Eanna (ab VI »Tiefchnitt«)	Nippur ITS	Susa acropole I	
S		11	IVa	XIV		
p	† ?	H i a t	IVb	†		† †
ä	† ?		IVc	H i a t	17A	älteste piktographische Tafeln
t		† ?	V			
	† ?	12	VIa	†	† †	
† †	† ?	†	VIb	XV	17B	†
	»4«?		H i a t	XVI ?	18D-A	†
M	5		VIc	XVII	(19)	†
i		H i a t			bis	†
t	7		VII	XVIII		†
t	8			XIX		†
e		13	VIII		22(?)	†
l	10			XX		†
						Hohlkugeln, Rollsiegel / undifferenzierte Zählmarken

und Plomben feststellbar sind.⁷⁰ An der Zusammengehörigkeit der vier Objektgattungen kann deshalb in formaler Hinsicht kein Zweifel bestehen.

Anders verhält es sich mit der funktionalen Bestimmung der einzelnen Gruppen und ihren Beziehungen zueinander. Soweit es den erstgenannten Punkt betrifft, sind noch am ehesten Antworten auf Fragen nach Inhalt und Funktion der numerischen Tafeln zu erwarten, da deren Zählsysteme zum Teil, in ausdifferenzierter Form,⁷¹ in den Verwaltungstexten der nachfolgenden frühschriftlichen Zeit weiter existiert haben könnten. Doch ist auch das bereits eine Frage der Interpretation, deren Diskussion noch keineswegs abgeschlossen zu sein scheint.⁷² Alle hiervon abweichenden Notationen blieben bisher unerklärt und wurden meist als Anzeichen älterer, weniger entwickelter Systeme gewertet.⁷³ Aufschlussreich ist in diesem Zusammenhang Robert Englunds Klassifizierung einer in Uruk gefundenen numerischen und möglicherweise ungesiegelten Tafel aus Gips als „primitive form“⁷⁴ (Abb. 7a), die auf einem Vergleich mit gleichen Tafeln aus dem nordsyrischen Raum und der Susiana beruht⁷⁵ (Abb. 7b–c). Diese sind von ovaler Form und enthalten jeweils auf nur einer Seite kreisrunde und lange zylindrische bis spitzovale Eindrücke, die in zwei Reihen übereinander angeordnet sind. Die Numerales der einzelnen Tafeln sind stets gleichgroß. Bereits der stratigraphische Kontext der Tafeln aus Susa, acropole I 18, Ḥabūba Kabira-Süd und Ġabal Aruda legt den Schluss nahe, dass solche „primitiven“ Tafeln über einen längeren Zeitraum in Gebrauch waren, nämlich spätestens vom Übergang von der Mittleren zur Späten Uruk-Zeit (Susa) bis in die Zeit nicht lange vor Einführung der Schrift (Ḥabūba Kabira-Süd und Ġabal Aruda). In einigen der in Anm. 75 genannten Orte wurden jedoch in gleichem Kontext weitere Tafeln gefunden, die wegen ihrer stärker differenzierten Numerales und deren Anordnung weniger „primiti-

⁷⁰ Ḥabūba Kabira-Süd: Rittig 2014, 341 (Abrollung S.29); Susa, acropole I 18: Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 15ff. (Hohlkugeln/Tafeln: 4/29, 10/21–23. 26; Hohlkugeln/Plomben: 1. 5/37; Hohlkugeln/Tafeln/Plomben: 2/24. 25/33).

⁷¹ Zu den Zählsystemen der archaischen Texte s. grundlegend Nissen/Damerow/Englund 1990; Englund 1998, 111ff. Ein Versuch, diese Systeme auf ältere numerische Tafeln und markierte Hohlkugeln zu übertragen, wurde in Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 137ff., unternommen.

⁷² S. zuletzt Englund 2006, 22ff.

⁷³ Englund 1998, 50 Anm. 98 („[...] it will be difficult to state with confidence whether a preliminary categorization [...] into early and late formats is justified. As a working hypothesis, it seems that the numerical tablets from Syria and northern Mesopotamia were of more primitive form than most exemplars from Susiana and Uruk.“).

⁷⁴ Zuerst publiziert von Reade 1992, und dort als „bug-eyed monster type“ bezeichnet; s. a. Englund 1998, 50 Anm. 98.

⁷⁵ Bei den nicht einzeln aufgeführten Vergleichsstücken dürfte es sich um Tafeln aus Ġabal Aruda (Van Driel 1982, 15 Abb. 1b [Tafel 10]), T. Brak (Oates 2002, 116 Abb. 6 unten), Susa acropole I 18 (Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 54 Taf. IV, 6. 7 [Nr. 20. 23]) und acropole I 17B (Le Brun 1978, 75 Abb. 9, 3; nur lange zylindrische Eindrücke) handeln. Nachzutragen sind zwei später veröffentlichte Tafeln aus Ḥabūba Kabira-Süd (Rittig 2014, Taf. 202, 2 [Tafel 10]) und Čuġa Miš (Alizadeh 2006, Taf. 22 H).

tiv“ zu sein scheinen. Von diesen weisen einige ein Merkmal auf, welches unabhängig vom Tafelformat sowie Anzahl, Größe und Anordnung der Numerale eine zuverlässige Unterscheidung in „älter“ und „jünger“ erlaubt: Die Siegelung der Tafelränder, die in Susa nicht früher als Schicht acropole I 17B belegt ist, sich in Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd wiederfindet und auf den frühesten Tafeln aus Uruk häufig festgestellt wurde (Abb. 6f).⁷⁶ Dieselbe Siegelpraxis wurde auch auf der vermeintlich „primitiven“ Tafel aus Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd angewendet, womit sich diese eindeutig als „jünger“, d. h. späturukzeitlich erweist und zeitlich nicht weit von den frühesten ideographischen Tafeln aus Uruk entfernt sein dürfte. Das altertümliche Aussehen der Tafel und ihre „einfachen“ Notationen müssen also andere, noch ungeklärte Gründe haben.

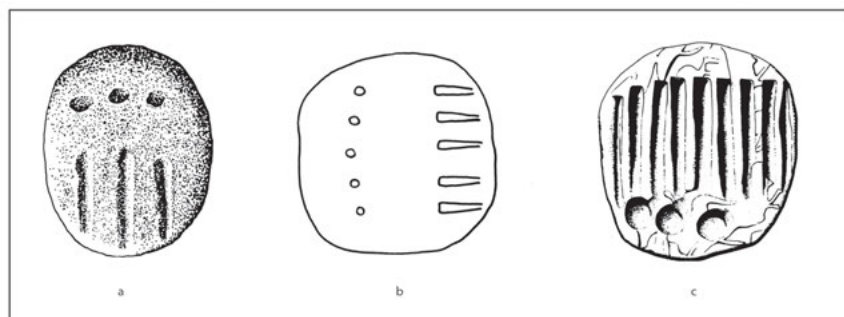


Abb. 7: Numerische Tafeln der sog. „*primitive form*“: Gipstafel aus Uruk (a), Tontafel aus Ḡabal Aruda (b) und aus Susa (c).

Dass numerische Tafeln auch im Fernhandel eingesetzt werden konnten, zeigt die Materialanalyse der vermutlich ältesten bisher gefundenen Tafel aus Hacinebi Tepe, die auf eine Herkunft aus der Susiana hinweist.⁷⁷ Vergleichbare Untersuchungen von insgesamt 7 Hohlkugeln aus Hacinebi Tepe, Tepe Faruḥabad und Uruk⁷⁸ sprechen hingegen in allen Fällen für lokale Herkunft, was im Falle der Kugeln aus Uruk im Widerspruch zur angenommenen susianischen Provenienz steht, die mit dem Stil der verwendeten Rollsiegel begründet wurde.⁷⁹ Innerörtliche Verwendung lässt sich auch für Čuḡa Miš anhand identischer Siegelabrollungen auf Hohlkugeln und Türriegelsicherungen eindeutig nachweisen.⁸⁰ Ein weiteres mögliches Indiz für innerörtliche Funktionen, das dann auch bei entsprechenden numerischen Tafeln und spitzovalen Plomben zu berücksichtigen wäre, sind die oben erwähnten Abdrücke von Rollsiegel-

⁷⁶ Vgl. Boehmer 1999.

⁷⁷ Stein 2001, 290.

⁷⁸ Stein 2001, 290; Wright 1981, 156; Daszkiewicz/van Ess/Schneider 2012, 97.

⁷⁹ Boehmer 1999, 114f.

⁸⁰ Alizadeh 1996, 130. Weitere Klarheit werden hier die Ergebnisse der in Vorbereitung befindlichen Materialanalysen der in Chicago befindlichen Exemplare bringen (pers. Mitteilung von C. Woods).

basen. Mit ihrer Hilfe könnte im Zweifelsfall das Originalsiegel identifiziert werden, mit dem die Abrollungen – es handelt sich in allen überprüfbaren Fällen stets um Abrollungen nur eines Siegels – vorgenommen wurden. Dies setzt aber voraus, dass der Siegelinhaber am Ort ansässig war oder sich zumindest vorübergehend dort aufhielt. Für Tonplomben lassen sich darüber hinaus keine Angaben machen.

Über die Funktion von Hohlkugeln lassen sich nur Vermutungen anstellen, da weder die seltenen Markierungen auf der Außenseite noch die Zählmarken im Inneren, von denen nur ein Bruchteil bekannt ist, bisher zufriedenstellend gedeutet werden konnten. Im Falle der Tonplomben spricht, wie oben gezeigt, eigentlich alles gegen die dort referierte Hypothese von Schmandt-Besserat, während eine Verwendung als Sicherung beweglicher wie ortsfester Behältnisse vorstellbar, aber nicht sicher nachweisbar ist.

3.6 Weitere Formen ideographischer Notationen: Numerisch-ideographische Tafeln und Töpfermarken

Bedeutung und Funktion von Zählmarken wurden schon mehrfach angesprochen. Im Falle der undifferenzierten Marken liegen bisher keine Ergebnisse vor, die eine umfassende Deutung erlauben. Es bleibt vor allem unklar, worin sich im Ursprung ältere Marken aus ungebranntem Ton, die möglicherweise ausschließlich für Hohlkugeln bestimmt waren,⁸¹ und jüngere aus gebranntem Ton, von denen eine größere Zahl durchlocht war, inhaltlich und funktionell voneinander unterschieden. Dagegen ist die Bedeutung differenzierter und gegenständlicher Zählmarken möglicherweise in all denjenigen Fällen erkennbar, in denen die eingeritzten Markierungen oder der Kontur mit den Ideogrammen der frühesten Schrifttafeln übereinstimmen. Dies setzt allerdings voraus, dass zwischenzeitlich kein Bedeutungswandel stattfand, was angesichts des mittlerweile auf Babylonien reduzierten Verbreitungsgebietes solcher bildhaften Zeichen nicht ganz ausgeschlossen erscheint. Im Falle semantischer Kontinuität jedoch wären, wie zuerst von Schmandt-Besserat aufgezeigt,⁸² für 51 Zeichen des älteren Zeichenrepertoires bereits gesicherte Bedeutungen ermittelt, was etwa 10 % des Gesamtbestandes entspricht (Abb. 8). Die hier abgebildeten 15 Übereinstimmungen von differenzierten Zählmarken mit Ideogrammen der ältesten Schriftstufe geben das Spektrum von 4 der insgesamt 7 von Schmandt-Besserat definierten Objektgruppen exemplarisch wieder. Es handelt sich um Symbole für Nutztiere, Nahrungsmittel, Textilien und überwiegend aus Metall hergestellte Produkte, von denen lediglich für die letztgenannte Gruppe wegen ihres Materials außerörtliche Herkunft

⁸¹ Zweifel hinsichtlich der Verwendung differenzierter Zählmarken in Hohlkugeln (s. Englund 2006, 17) sind angesichts der unsicheren Befunde wohl berechtigt.

⁸² Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 142ff.

Tiere				
	3: 51		ATU 761 ZATU 575	Schaf
	3: 54		ATU 763 ZATU 571	Lamm
	14: 3		ATU 45a ZATU 12	Kuh
	14: 8		ATU 30 ZATU 145	Hund
Nahrung				
	1: 29		ATU 535 ZATU 196	Brot
	6: 14		ATU 733 ZATU 393	Öl
	8: 29		ATU 539 ZATU 197	Nahrung
Textilien				
	3: 24		ZATU 452b	Gewand-/ Stoffart
	3: 28		ATU 755 ZATU 555	Gewand-/ Stoffart
	3: 30		ATU 759 ZATU 452e	Gewand-/ Stoffart
	3: 32		ZATU 452e	Gewand-/ Stoffart
Waren				
	1: 38, 39		ZATU 267	Parfum
	8: 14		ZATU 63	Metall
	8: 15		ATU 45	Metall
	8: 17		ATU 703 ZATU 301	Metall

Abb. 8: Vergleich differenzierter und gegenständlicher Zählmarken mit Ideogrammen der frühesten Schrifttafeln aus Uruk (nach Schmandt-Besserat 1992a).

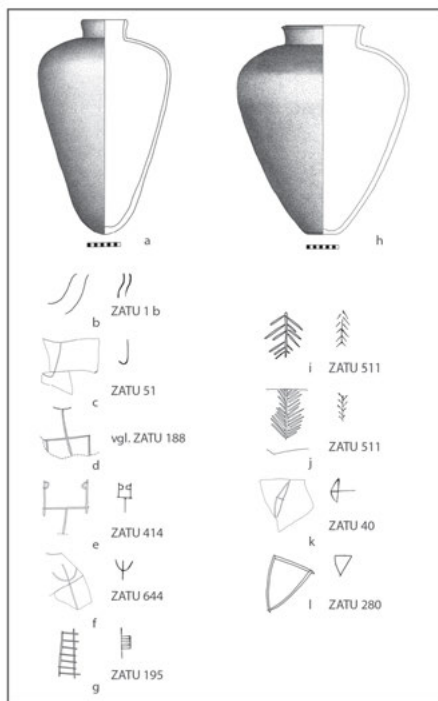


Abb. 9: Ritzmarken auf Vorratsgefäßen aus Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd.

angenommen werden könnte. Zwingend ist dies allerdings nicht, so dass überwiegend oder ganz mit der Kennzeichnung von Produkten zu rechnen ist, die lokaler Herkunft und Gegenstand innerörtlicher Distribution waren. Die Bedeutungen von insgesamt 17 weiteren Symbolen, die von Schmandt-Besserat in 3 Objektgruppen („Types of Container“, „Service“ und „Miscellaneous“) zusammengefasst wurden, müssen weitestgehend als nicht geklärt gelten.

Auf ideographische Frühformen in vorschriftlicher Zeit lassen auch zwei weitere späturukzeitliche Fundgattungen schließen. Dies sind zum einen Tafeln, die als „numero-ideographic“ bezeichnet werden (Abb. 6g) und außer den Numeralen ein bis zwei eingeritzte Ideogramme aufweisen, wie sie auch auf den frühesten Schrifttafeln belegt sind.⁸³ Tafeln dieses Typs sind nicht nur aus Susa, Godin Tepe und Tepe

Siyalk bekannt geworden, sondern auch aus dem Bereich des „Roten Tempels“ in Uruk-Eanna,⁸⁴ was darauf hindeutet, dass sie auch noch zu Beginn der schriftlichen Zeit in Gebrauch waren. Bei der anderen Gattung handelt es sich um vor dem Brand eingeritzte Gefäßmarken mit unverkennbaren Parallelen zu Ideogrammen der frühschriftlichen Zeit, deren Vorkommen sich auf zwei Arten von Vorratsgefäßen⁸⁵ zu beschränken scheint (Abb. 9).⁸⁶ Es fällt auf, dass diese Gefäßmarken, soweit bisher ersichtlich, keine Parallelen zu den Innenzeichnungen differenzierter Zählmarken

⁸³ S. Abb. 1c, d und vgl. Englund 1994, passim; 1998, 51ff.; 2004, 126f.

⁸⁴ Vgl. Englund 1994, passim; 1998, 51ff.; 2004, 126f.

⁸⁵ Gefäße dieser Art wurden bisher ausschließlich in späturukzeitlichen Fundzusammenhängen wie z. B. dem „Riemchengebäude“ in Uruk gefunden; vgl. Sürenhagen 2014, 158, 171.

⁸⁶ Eine systematische Vorlage solcher Marken fand bisher nur im Falle von Ḥabūba Kabīra-Süd statt (Sürenhagen 2014, Taf. 69–73). Die Grabungen im mittelurukzeitlichen Tall Šaiḥ Hassan erbrachten kein einziges Beispiel, und auch aus anderen mittelurukzeitlichen Orten ist nichts Vergleichbares bekannt geworden. Andererseits wurden in Tall Šaiḥ Hassan 4 Spinnwirtel mit Ritz- und Punktstichverzierungen gefunden, die mit den Markierungen auf einigen differenzierten Zählmarken auffällig übereinstimmen (pers. Mitteilung von F. Bachmann, die die Endpublikation der Grabung vorbereitet).

mit ihren signifikanten Flächenbegrenzungen darstellen. Stattdessen handelt es sich um freistehende symbolartige Zeichen, deren Bedeutung trotz vorhandener Übereinstimmungen mit den Ideogrammen der ältesten Schriftstufe nur zum Teil (und unter Vorbehalt) erschlossen werden kann. So bietet sich für Abb. 9b die Interpretation A „Wasser“, für Abb. 9i–j ŠE „Gerste/Getreide“ an, was auf den Gefäßinhalt hindeuten würde. Ferner könnten Abb. 9c (BAR/BAN₂, eine Maßeinheit) und 9k (BA/IGI „Zuteilung“) als Volumen- und Funktionsangaben verstanden werden. Unverständlich bleibt hingegen GAN₂ „Feld“ in Abb. 9g, falls die „Lesung“ zutreffen sollte. Unklar ist schließlich die Bedeutung der Zeichen in Abb. 9d–f und 9l, obwohl Übereinstimmungen mit Ideogrammen der ältesten Schriftzeugnisse bestehen.

4 Anmerkungen zu Material, Herstellung und Handhabung urukzeitlicher Informationsspeicher

Eingangs wurden schrifttragende Artefakte als Teil der materiellen Kultur definiert, deren Analyse auch den Aspekt ihrer Materialität als „integraler Bestandteil der Kultur, des sozialen Lebens und der menschlichen Erfahrung“⁸⁷ miteinbeziehen sollte. Wie Annette Kehnel und Diamantis Panagiotopoulos jedoch anmerken, fokussierte die Erforschung von Texten bislang primär auf das Geschriebene selbst, den Textinhalt, ohne dabei den Träger eingehender zu berücksichtigen.⁸⁸ In der traditionellen Schriftforschung bleiben gerade die Fragen nach der Herstellung von Schriftträgern, der Herkunft ihrer Trägerstoffe, den Schreibutensilien oder der eigentlichen Technologie des Schreibens meist unberücksichtigt, dabei bilden insbesondere diese die Grundlagen für den eigentlichen Schreibprozess.⁸⁹

4.1 Material und Herstellung

Im Falle der frühschriftlichen Artefakte Mesopotamiens wurde bereits hervorgehoben, dass diese aus zumeist ungebranntem Ton bestehen.⁹⁰ Ton als Trägermaterial für Schrift tritt in Mesopotamien erstmals in der Uruk-Zeit auf und bleibt als solcher über

⁸⁷ Karagianni/Schwindt/Tsouparopoulou 2015, 34.

⁸⁸ Kehnel/Panagiotopoulos 2014, 2; s. a. Powell 2009, 11; Taylor/Cartwright 2011, 297; Piquette 2013, 213f.

⁸⁹ Ott/Kiyanrad 2015, 161.

⁹⁰ Mit Ausnahme der Zählmarken, die in Einzelfällen auch aus Stein, Bitumen, Fritte oder gebranntem Ton hergestellt wurden (vgl. Anm. 37) und vereinzelt auch numerischer Tafeln, welche aus Gips modelliert wurden (s. o.).

die folgenden Jahrtausende in Nutzung.⁹¹ Ton ist im Vorderen Orient im Überfluss vorhanden, leicht zugänglich und ohne großen Aufwand zu bearbeiten. Als Arbeitsmaterial war der Rohstoff schon lange vor seiner Verwendung als Schriftträger bekannt, somit bestanden auch schon Erfahrungswerte in seiner Bearbeitung: Er fand Verwendung als Baumaterial, in der Keramikproduktion und bei der Herstellung mannigfaltiger Gebrauchsgegenstände.⁹² Ton ist ein hochplastischer, leicht formbarer und nach seiner Trocknung haltbarer Werkstoff, seine Oberfläche ist leicht manipulierbar und kann bemalt, geritzt, gestempelt werden.⁹³ Es waren sicher nicht zuletzt diese Eigenschaften, die ausschlaggebend waren für seinen Einsatz als Schrift- und Zeichenträger.

Im Falle der Zählmarken wurde zunächst der Zählmarken zunächst häufig noch unbehandelter, z. T. mit Unreinheiten versetzter Ton genutzt, erst ab dem 4. Jahrtausend v. Chr. ist die Verwendung von geschlämmtem, sehr reinem und ungemalgtem Ton zu beobachten.⁹⁴ Die Herstellung undifferenzierter und differenzierter Zählmarken erfordert keine großen Vorkenntnisse. Wie Schmandt-Besserat hervorhebt, entstehen die simpelsten Formen bereits durch das Herumspielen mit Ton, während akkuratere Formen durch Kneten und gezieltes Rollen kleinerer Tonstücke zwischen den Handflächen oder Fingerkuppen erzielt werden.⁹⁵ Lediglich die Herstellung gegenständlicher Zählmarken erfordert ein wenig mehr Sorgfalt in der Modellierung. Zählmarken konnten wie bereits erwähnt auch verziert werden – sei es durch Ritzungen, Punktierungen, Appliken oder vereinzelt auch Bemalung.⁹⁶ Abschließend wurden die Stücke an der Luft getrocknet oder im Falle der differenzierten Zählmarken gebrannt.⁹⁷

Auch Hohlkugeln wurden meist aus reinem, einschlussfreiem Ton hergestellt, der, wie im Falle der Hohlkugeln aus Ḫabūba Kabīra-Süd, auch fein geschlämmt sein konnte.⁹⁸ Die computertomographischen Untersuchungen der Hohlkugeln aus Čuga Miš und Susa offenbarten neben dem Inhalt der Kugeln jedoch auch, dass bei der Qualität und Aufarbeitung des verwendeten Tons erhebliche Varianzen bestehen

⁹¹ Zwar wurden im Laufe der mesopotamischen Schriftgeschichte auch andere Werkstoffe wie Stein (s. z. B. Balke und Pollock in diesem Band), Metall, Wachstafeln oder Papyrus als Schriftträger genutzt, doch blieb Ton bis zur Einführung der Alphabetschrift der Hauptträger von Schrift.

⁹² Zur Aufbereitung von Ton als Trägerstoff s. auch Taylor/Cartwright 2011; Taylor 2011; zur Verwendung des Materials Ton s. Balke et al. 2015, 277; Wengrow 1998.

⁹³ Marzahn 2013, 178; Balke et al. 2015, 278.

⁹⁴ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 29.

⁹⁵ Ebd., 30. Schmandt-Besserat erwähnt auch die Möglichkeit, dass einige Typen in Modellen geformt wurden, für diesen wurden aber bislang noch keine Nachweise erbracht (Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 30).

⁹⁶ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 30; welche Gegenstände genau zur Markierung der Zählmarken verwendet wurden, ist bislang nicht eingehender untersucht worden.

⁹⁷ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 30: Es wurde ein Richtwert von ca. 700° C ermittelt.

⁹⁸ Schmandt-Besserat 1980, 363; 1992a, 110; Ḫabūba Kabīra-Süd: Rittig 2014, 346.

können.⁹⁹ Die Herstellung der Hohlkugeln erforderte zunächst das Formen einer handlichen, rundlichen bis ovalen Tonkugel von 5 bis 7 cm Durchmesser, welche dann mit Hilfe der Finger ausgehöhlt wurde.¹⁰⁰ Nach dem Befüllen der Kugel wurde die verbleibende Öffnung entweder mittels eines Tonklumpens, aber auch durch Überlappung der überstehenden Ränder verschlossen. Die Oberfläche wurde dabei keiner besonderen Behandlung unterzogen, vereinzelt wurde eine Seite abgeflacht, vermutlich zur besseren Aufbewahrung.¹⁰¹ Hohlkugeln wurden mehrheitlich an der Luft getrocknet, jedoch konnten sie auch gebrannt werden.¹⁰² Auch spitzovale Plomben wurden aus einem Tonklumpen hergestellt, wobei dieser um eine Schnur oder einen Knoten herum geformt und teilweise prismatisch abgeflacht wurde. Über die Qualität des verwendeten Tons finden sich nur selten Angaben, die Exemplare aus Ḥabūba Kabira-Süd sind beispielsweise durchweg aus geschlammtem Ton hergestellt.¹⁰³

Den numerischen Tafeln wurde in der Forschung bislang die größte Aufmerksamkeit zu teil. Sie bilden ein einheitliches Corpus, ihre Größe ist im Vergleich zu späteren Tontafeln gering, sie passen bequem in eine Handfläche und sie wurden bis auf wenige Ausnahmen aus Ton hergestellt, welcher sorgfältig vorbereitet und geschlammmt wurde.¹⁰⁴ Die Entstehung der numerischen Tafeln erscheint als logische Konsequenz aus der Nutzung von Hohlkugeln mit Notationen auf der Außenhülle: Anstelle des aufwändigeren Einschließens von Zählmarken in Tonkugeln wurde nun ein flacher Tonträger modelliert, bei dem lediglich die Oberfläche als Informationsspeicher diente, ohne dass die Verwendung von Zählmarken in ihrer physischen Form nötig war.¹⁰⁵ Die Herstellung der Tontafeln war in dieser frühen experimentellen Phase noch sehr uneinheitlich. So wurden die Oberflächen einiger Exemplare sorgfältig geglättet, ihre Ecken und Kanten gerundet und ihre Form sorgsam von Hand modelliert, andere Tafeln hingegen wurden weniger sorgfältig verarbeitet.¹⁰⁶ Generell ist bei den frühen Tontafeln eine hohe Varianz in der Formgebung zu beobachten, beginnend mit grob ovalen, rundlichen Exemplaren, bis hin zu kleinen rechteckigen, kissenförmigen Tafeln in der Späten Uruk-Zeit. Allen gemeinsam ist eine flache oder leicht konkave Oberfläche zum Aufbringen von Notationen.

⁹⁹ Woods 2012, 7; Drilhon/Laval-Jeantet/Lahmi 1987, 341.

¹⁰⁰ Dies belegen die im Inneren der Hohlkugeln erhaltenen Fingereindrücke, vgl. auch Schmandt-Besserat 1980, 364; 1992a, 112.

¹⁰¹ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 110.

¹⁰² Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 112.

¹⁰³ Rittig 2014, 348.

¹⁰⁴ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 133; Rittig 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Dies bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass Zählmarken von nun an nicht mehr genutzt wurden. So wurden in Ziyaret Tepe in der heutigen Türkei bis dato 462 Zählmarken aus der neuassyrischen Zeit entdeckt (MacGinnis et al. 2014 mit Diskussion weiterer Funde).

¹⁰⁶ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 133; Englund 1998, 56ff. Abb. 17; Dittmann 2012, 74; Marzahn 2013, 179.

4.2 Handhabung

Die Informationsspeicher der Uruk-Zeit weisen verschiedene Notationsspuren auf, welche bis auf wenige Ausnahmen¹⁰⁷ vor dem Trocknen der Schriftträger aufgebracht wurden. Es finden sich zum einen Fingereindrücke und Abdrücke differenzierter Zählmarken, zum anderen mit Geräten wie Griffeln und Rundhölzern angebrachte Eindrücke sowie mit Griffeln markierte Piktogramme. Im Falle des Trägermaterials Ton spielt der Faktor Zeit eine entscheidende Rolle, denn am einfachsten ist die Beschriftung noch feuchter Tonobjekte.¹⁰⁸ Es besteht zudem ein entscheidender Unterschied zwischen der Anbringung von Numeralen und Piktogrammen: Numerales wurden mit gerundeten Schreibhilfen eingedrückt, Piktogramme dagegen mittels eines Griffels eingeritzt,¹⁰⁹ wobei letztere Praxis an charakteristischen Kapillarlinien und Abrissmarken im Ton erkennbar ist.¹¹⁰

Weniger eindeutig sind dagegen jene Instrumente bestimmbar, mit denen die Numeraleindrücke auf Hohlkugeln, Plomben und numerischen Tafeln aufgebracht wurden. So finden sich längliche Kerben verschiedener Dimensionen und runde Einstiche, welche vermutlich mit einem im Querschnitt runden, hölzernen Stylus aufgebracht wurden.¹¹¹ Das Einritzen oder -stechen von Kerben mit einem spitzen Gegenstand, eventuell mit einem Griffel, ist dagegen kaum belegt, ebenso das Einbetten und auch Abdrücken von Zählmarken in den Schriftträger.

Wie Joachim Marzahn für die Verwendung des Schreibgriffels betont, ist vor allem dessen Haltung entscheidend für die zu erzielende Form des Schriftzeichens: So lassen sich durch Anheben oder Absenken des Winkels zum Schriftträger Länge, Tiefe und Aussehen der Schriftzeichen variieren.¹¹² Ähnliches lässt sich experimentell auch für die Anbringung der Numeraleindrücke nachweisen (vgl. Abb. 10). Sowohl auf den Hohlkugeln, als auch auf den numerischen Tafeln finden sich längliche Eindrücke mit vertieftem Kopfende und kleine, kreisrunde Einstiche. Diese scheinen mit einem Rundholz oder Stylus geringen Durchmessers aufgebracht worden zu sein, wobei die Länge je nach Haltungswinkel variieren kann (vgl. Abb. 10a).¹¹³ Die

¹⁰⁷ Vgl. Anm. 64.

¹⁰⁸ Balke et al. 2015, 284.

¹⁰⁹ Vgl. Marzahn 2013b, 181ff.: In Mesopotamien wurden, wie bildliche Darstellungen und auch mikroskopische Aufnahmen belegen, zum Aufbringen von Schriftzeichen meist Griffel aus Rohr verwendet, doch ist auch die Nutzung knöcherner und später auch metallener Schreibgeräte nicht auszuschließen.

¹¹⁰ Ebd., 185.

¹¹¹ Dass es sich wohl mehrheitlich um Geräte aus einem pflanzlichen Material handelte, bemerkten bereits Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 14, Anm. 4: „traces des fibres ligneuses“.

¹¹² Marzahn 2013a, 181f.

¹¹³ Le Brun/Vallat 1978, 14f.

kegelförmigen Eindrücke, von Schmandt-Besserat als „*wedges*“ bezeichnet,¹¹⁴ lassen sich durch die Verwendung eines im Durchmesser breiteren Rundholzes erzeugen, welcher in einem steileren Winkel auf den Schriftträger appliziert wird (vgl. Abb. 10b). Dies legt die Vermutung nahe, dass gleichzeitig mehrere verschiedene Schreibinstrumente in Gebrauch waren.¹¹⁵



Abb. 10: Erscheinungsbild von Markierungen verschiedenartiger Schreibinstrumente: a) Rundholz mit kleinem Durchmesser (ca. 0,3 cm), b) Schilfrohr mit großem Durchmesser (ca. 0,8 cm), c) Fingerkuppenabdrücke.

Eine weitere zu beobachtende Praxis ist das bereits thematisierte Versiegeln der Informationsspeicher mit Rollsiegeln, und zwar bevor Notationen oder Piktogramme aufgebracht wurden.¹¹⁶ Wie bereits erläutert, wurden die Rollsiegel dabei mehrheitlich flächendeckend aufgebracht, dabei konnten bis zu 5 verschiedene Rollsiegel zum Einsatz kommen.¹¹⁷ Seltener wurde zusätzlich die Rollsiegelbasis eingedrückt, eine Praxis, die für Hohlkugeln, Plomben und numerische Tafeln belegt ist. Abbas Alizadeh konnte für Čuga Miš beobachten, dass der Siegelungsprozess einem klaren

¹¹⁴ Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 134.

¹¹⁵ Dies lässt sich für Susa eindeutig belegen, s. Vallat 1973, 97.

¹¹⁶ Vgl. dazu auch Matthews 1993, 24; Ross 2014, 306.

¹¹⁷ Vgl. dazu auch Matthews 1993, 25.

Ablauf folgte, wobei zunächst der Äquatorialbereich der Hohlkugeln gesiegelt wurde und dann die beiden Kappen.¹¹⁸ Im Hinblick auf die Siegelung von Tontafeln lässt sich auch eine chronologische Entwicklung der Technik nachzeichnen: Während zunächst nur die Oberfläche der Tontafeln gesiegelt wurde, in Susa z. B. in der Länge der Tafel folgenden Registern,¹¹⁹ werden in der Späten Uruk-Zeit auch die Ränder in den Siegelungsprozess miteinbezogen. Eine eingehende Untersuchung der urukzeitlichen Siegelpraxis auf Hohlkugeln und numerischen Tafeln steht allerdings noch aus.¹²⁰

5 Fazit: Die frühen Schriftträger der Uruk-Zeit und ihr Nachwirken in Mesopotamien

Dass es sich bei den in unterschiedlicher Weise untereinander verbundenen Zählmarken, Hohlkugeln, numerischen Tafeln und spitzovalen Plomben des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. um ein komplexes Instrumentarium vorschriftlicher Wirtschaftsverwaltung handelt, dürfte hinreichend deutlich geworden sein. Fraglich ist hingegen, ob wir es nur mit Zeugnissen innerörtlicher Verwaltungspraxis oder auch mit Kontrollinstrumente des Nah- und Fernhandels, wie er für die Mittlere und Späte Uruk-Zeit vorauszusetzen ist, zu tun haben. Beide Möglichkeiten sind wiederholt in Betracht gezogen worden,¹²¹ ohne dass ein eindeutiges Ergebnis erzielt wurde. Dies liegt zum einen daran, dass weder die Zeichensprache der Zählmarken noch die der Markierungen auf Hohlkugeln, Tafeln und Plomben in ausreichendem Maße entschlüsselt werden

118 Alizadeh 1996, 125f.

119 Ross 2014, 306.

120 Bislang erschienene Untersuchungen befassen sich hauptsächlich mit der Motivik (s. z. B. Amiet 1972; Brandes 1979; Boehmer 1999), weniger mit der eigentlichen Praxis des Siegelns und damit verbundener administrativer Prozesse (wie sie beispielsweise für Arslantepe vorgelegt wurde, vgl. Frangipane et al. 2007).

121 Amiet interpretierte schon früh Hohlkugeln als Zeugnisse eines Warenaustausches zwischen der Zentrale Susa und umliegenden Ortschaften der Susiana (Amiet 1966, 70). Zu vergleichbaren Ergebnissen gelangte Helene Kantor im Falle von Čuġa Miš (Alizadeh 1996, 126). Von vorwiegend innerörtlichen Funktionen geht Reinhard Dittmann (Dittmann 1986; 2012) aus. Andererseits wurden, wegen vermeintlicher in situ Befunde in Ḫabūba Kabīra-Süd, Hohlkugeln, Tafeln und Plomben als Instrumente des Fernhandels in Betracht gezogen (Sürenhagen 1986a). Die These findet sich auch in Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 183, wo unter Berufung auf dieselben Befunde von „ware houses“ und „residences of Sumerian administrators, southern Mesopotamian accountants or their foreign subordinates“ die Rede ist. Erst spätere Untersuchungen (Sürenhagen 2013) ergaben, dass die Hausinventare des Ortes aus Planierschutt bestehen, der nach Abriss der Gebäude von anderer Stelle dorthin gebracht wurde. Damit ist die Fernhandelsthese anhand der Befunde in Ḫabūba Kabīra-Süd nicht länger begründbar.

konnten. Auch ist der Zugang zur Bilderwelt der Objektsiegelungen, ungeachtet einiger Bezüge zur Ikonographie der nachfolgenden frühgeschichtlichen Zeit, immer noch weitgehend verschlossen. Damit aber ist eine Identifizierung der siegelführenden Institutionen und/oder ihrer Repräsentanten¹²² – falls es sich denn um solche und nicht um Händler, Handelskontore oder andere Vertreter des privaten Sektors handeln sollte – nicht oder nur unzureichend möglich, und auch die Frage nach ihrem Sitz lässt sich nicht beantworten. Betrachtet man die oben genannten Materialuntersuchungen an Hohlkugeln und Tafeln im Zusammenhang mit den auf anderem Wege gewonnenen Indizien für die innerörtliche Verwendung solcher Objekte (Abrollungen desselben Siegels auf Hohlkugeln und Türriegelsicherungen, Eindrücke von Rollsiegelbasen auf Objekten aller drei Gattungen), dann wird deutlich, dass zumindest die Tafeln örtlich wie auch im Fernhandel (weitgehend unbekannte) Funktionen erfüllten. Für Hohlkugeln und Plomben bleibt dies nur eine Vermutung, und in allen drei Fällen kann nicht mit Gewissheit gesagt werden, um welche Güter in welchen Mengen es sich handelte, und wer an solchen Transaktionen beteiligt war.

Zweifellos fand in der Mittleren und Späten Uruk-Zeit die Entwicklung zahlreicher innovativer Techniken und Praktiken statt, die maßgebend für die in den folgenden Jahrtausenden praktizierte Schrifttradition in Mesopotamien werden sollten: Die Verwendung von Ton als Werkstoff für Informationsträger, die Schrifttechnik – das Notieren mittels Griffeln und Rundhölzern, das Versiegeln von Dokumenten durch Rollsiegel und nicht zuletzt die Form der Tontafel als Schriftträger. Doch weder die (Keil-)Schrift, noch ihr Träger – die Tontafel – blieben in den folgenden Jahrhunderten gleichförmig; im Gegenteil: Als Teil der aktiven materiellen Kultur unterlagen sie im Laufe ihrer fortdauernden Nutzung stetem Wandel.

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122 Die ausführlichsten Untersuchungen zu diesem Thema finden sich in Dittmann 1986 und 2012.

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Abbildungsnachweise

- Abb. 1: Englund 1994, Taf. 20, W 6883,a (a); 21, W 6883,g (b); 10, W 6601 (c); 18, W 6881,o2+ab (d); 26, W 7227,a (e); 27, W 7227,c (f).
- Abb. 2: Englund 1998, 37 Abb. 7.
- Abb. 3: Nach Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 33 Abb. 23; mit Änderungen und Ergänzungen.
- Abb. 4: Nach Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 33 Abb. 23; mit Änderungen.
- Abb. 5: Schmandt-Besserat 1992b, 203 subtype 1:1 (a). 206 subtype 2:1 (b). 208 subtype 3:2 (c). 212 subtype 4:4 (d). 214 subtype 5:1 (e). 216 subtype 6:2 (f). 218 subtype 7:1 (g). 220 subtype 8:2 (h). 222 subtype 9:1 (i). 223 subtype 10:1 (j). 224 subtype 11:1 (k). 225 subtype 12:1 (l). 226 subtype 13:3 (m). 229 subtype 14:3 (n). 230 subtype 15:14 (o). 209 subtype 3:40 (p). 3:42 (q). 3:42A (r). 3:43 (s). 3:45 (t). 3:46 (u).
- Abb. 6: Boese 1995, 104 Abb. 8b (a); Le Brun / Vallat 1978, 45 Abb. 3, 1 (b); Rittig 2014, Taf. 200, 9 (c); Le Brun / Vallat 1978, 45 Abb. 3, 3 (d). 47 Abb. 4, 3 (e); Le Brun 1978, 75 Abb. 9, 2 (f); Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 135 Abb. 85; Rittig 2014, Taf. 200, 7 (i). 206, 2 (h). 207, 1 (j). 208, 1 (k); Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 109 Abb. 53 (l).
- Abb. 7: Reade 1992, Taf. 79 (a); van Driel 1982, 15 Abb. 1b, 8 (b); Le Brun / Vallat 1978, 54 Abb. 4, 6(c).
- Abb. 8: Nach Schmandt-Besserat 1992a, 143–145. 147.
- Abb. 9: Sürenhagen 2014, Taf. 46, G 629 (h); 48, G 656 (a); 69, R 21 (l); 70, R 29 (j). R 31 (i); 71, R 52 (e); 72, R 54 (d). R 57 (b). R 58 (c). R 67 (f); 73, R 81 (g). R 86 (k).
- Abb. 10: Fotografie der Autoren.

Jakob Andersson

Private Commemorative Inscriptions of the Early Dynastic and Sargonic Periods: Some Considerations

1 The Materiality of Inscribed Commemorative Objects

The types of inscriptions investigated in this paper are well-known to all who are acquainted with Near Eastern and other ancient or antique cultures. The focus here is upon the message and on the interrelations between the devotee, the message and the medium, which will allow for some very general conclusions on formal and functional aspects of personalized offerings in early Mesopotamia.¹ The social relations that are made obvious through inscriptions, between people and the objects they donated, may be termed the materiality of these objects.² The contrasting of private and royal points to similarities as well as differences in the practice of having objects inscribed for different purposes; including offering inscribed gifts to gods and to temples. There are, furthermore, inscribed objects without explicit mention of a deity or a temple, found in religious settings; and other objects still, which appear to be commemorative objects dedicated to deities, but which have been encountered in funerary contexts. Some of these are also of interest to this investigation, as they bear witness to a tradition of personalization of objects—linking an individual to his or her material surroundings. Included in this survey are objects personalized by means of writing. Exempted are regular cylinder seals, which do not contain a clause on the seal being offered to a divinity, as well as inscribed stone weights.³

This brief article represents the current state of the collection of data. A more comprehensive investigation of the material is under way, and will take into consideration

¹ This paper represents a first step in a much larger survey of non-royal commemorative objects and their inscriptions, to be published in the future by the present author. I am grateful to the organizers of the workshop for having invited me, and to the participants for valuable suggestions made during the sessions. A debt of gratitude also goes to Kamran V. Zand, Heidelberg, who read and commented upon an earlier version of the paper, and to the anonymous reviewer. The basis is made up chiefly by standard treatments of Early Dynastic and Sargonic inscriptions both with a textual and archaeological focus. Chief among these are: Steible 1982a and 1982b; Gelb/Kienast 1990; Braun-Holzinger 1991; Frayne 1993; Kienast/Sommerfeld 1994; and reviews like Bauer 1985a, 1985b; Marzahn 1987; Krebernik 1991. Additions were made from more recent text publications.

² See, e.g. Evans 2012, 5–6, 110, with further literature given in note 8, on p. 209.

³ For regular inscribed cylinder seals, see Rohn 2011; for inscribed weights from the period involved, see Powell 1987–1990, 508 § V.

other facets of the objects, their production and distribution over time and space, both regionally and locally, as well as other aspects of the language and writing contained in the inscriptions than those accounted for here.

As has been noted by Anne de Hemmer Gudme in the introduction to her *Before the God in this Place for Good Remembrance*, a definitive study of votive practice has yet to be written, despite the fact that the phenomenon is well-attested over time and in many cultures.⁴ Gudme's study focuses primarily on votive practice as illustrated in the Hebrew Bible, and in particular on epigraphic and archaeological material from Mount Gerizim, about 45 kilometres north-northeast of Jerusalem, but is commendable for its general applicability to more ancient Near Eastern materials. It will be referred to in the following to illustrate the practice of offering inscribed objects.

1.1 Commemorative, Votive or Dedicative?

Some words on the usage of the term 'commemorative' in this paper might be in place, as it may help to place the subject matter in a broader perspective and to underscore the intersection between the material object and the materiality of the inscribed message. The use here of the term commemorative, in contrast with Gudme's use of 'votive' is intentional, in that it allows for a further subdivision of the Mesopotamian material into objects which were expressly presented to a deity for the benefit of the agent him- or herself (votive), or a third party (dedicatory). But it also allows for inclusion of pieces which include the name of a person and a formula of offering, but without explicit mention of a recipient.

The salient point in the use of 'commemorative' is that it focuses on the life of the object after it had been placed in the context where it would see practical use. But it also incorporates the material aspects of procurement of raw materials and the whole production process for which the devotee could take credit. The object, then, was a lasting reminder of the person as well as the whole chain of interrelated events that led to the object's placement, presumably most often in a cultic context.

The notion of commemoration also encompasses the few known independent tags or tablets accompanying objects which may have been uninscribed, and where the former transmitted the desired message. This notion also allows for inclusion of building inscriptions which share a number of traits and formulae with votive and dedicatory inscriptions, but which represent more substantial investments of time and effort into an object consecrated for use by its divine owner.⁵

⁴ Gudme 2013, 2. An excellent introduction to the subject, the materials, object types and inscriptions is given in Braun-Holzinger 1991, 1–25.

⁵ See van Driel 1973a, 99, where the author opines that "building inscriptions left by Mesopotamian kings are dedicatory inscriptions when they deal with constructions meant for the gods"; that is, they

Gudme in her investigation departs from two main assumptions: the central concept is that votive practice, broadly defined as gifts to the gods, is the practice of giving gifts to deities in order to establish or maintain a relationship that is seen as being mutually beneficial for both deity and worshipper. The nature of the durable object, including the votive inscription, further emphasizes this aspect by lending the worshipper a lasting material presence in front of the deity, acting as a memento of the gift.⁶

The use of the term votive is not unproblematic in itself, as definitions tend to waver between literal interpretations of the term, and its Latin etymology, implying the fulfilment of a vow made previous to the offering. On the other end of the spectrum, the term is sometimes used inclusively, to denote just about any object found in a cultic context.⁷

The main Sumerian verb used in donations of movable objects, including persons, to gods and temples during the third millennium BCE is *a-ru*,⁸ and for objects from the northern floodplain during the ED period *sa₁₂-rig*,⁹ is employed. Both correspond to Akkadian *šarākum*.⁹ The case marking the recipient is the dative, *-ra* in Sumerian,¹⁰ which due to its syntactic placement and for orthographic reasons is often left unexpressed in the object chain, but which often appears in the verbal prefix chain. Inscriptions in Akkadian often use the preposition *ana* ‘to, for’. Both the Sumerian and the Akkadian formulae basically express that a gift is given for the benefit of the intended recipient. Other verbs which occur as main verbs in ED commemorative inscriptions are the rare occurrences of *dù*, ‘to erect’,¹¹ and *dīm* ‘to create’.¹² In the Sargonic period, *a-ru* is the only verb found in votive and dedicatory inscriptions which feature a finite verb.

No distinction in the choice of verb is found separating the rare anonymous—yet inscribed—donation from those which are personalized, whether votive or dedicatory.¹³ This may be taken to imply that the donation of a non-personalized item was

involve a stated purpose benefitting directly someone other than the devotee or, here, builder.

⁶ Gudme 2013, 3.

⁷ See Gudme 2013, 6–8. One may compare the opinions of Brinkman 1979, 56 n. 179 and Grayson 1980, 156–157 n. 80, where Grayson opted for an etymologically defined interpretation of the term votive.

⁸ See Braun-Holzinger 1991, 1, for a handy overview of the terminology.

⁹ CAD Š/2, 40–48. See also Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 156 n. 9, for the use of *sa₁₂-rig*, as an “Akka-dogram”.

¹⁰ Thomsen 2001, 313.

¹¹ Steible 1982b, 282–283 (AnUr 7); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 252 (St 71), on an ED IIIa Ur statue in connection with the manufacturing (tu) of a statue for the goddess Damgalnuna and the building of (her) temple.

¹² Steible 1982a, 266 (Ent. 76); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 310 (W 9); Steible 1982a, 361 (AnLag. 6); Steible 1982b, 345 (Anonym 10); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 255 (St 85).

¹³ The only anonymous votive object featuring a verbal form known to the present writer is Steible 1982b, 197 (AnAdab 10); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 93 n. 357 and 123 (G 47), a stone bowl offered to the

perceived as having the same general function as an object featuring the name of the donor or an indirect object in favour of whom the object was donated.¹⁴ But the inscription added an extra social dimension; it served as a memento of the donation itself. It placed part of a person, his or her name, in the proximity of the receiving deity. And, furthermore, the object served as a distinguishing social marker visible to those with access to the place where the object was deposited or to those who happened to witness the introduction of the object to the temple.¹⁵

With regards to dedicatory inscriptions, it is of course no use speculating whether a person benefitting from the donation was supposed to be present during the introduction of the object into the temple.

1.2 Commemorative Inscriptions

The textual genre of commemorative inscriptions has a long tradition of treatment within studies of ancient Near Eastern cultures and languages. When used for modern didactic purposes, texts termed royal inscriptions are commonplace in textbooks. The royal inscriptional material tends to have a readily discernible structure and often report on specific incidents; informing their later peers and other future readers about royal deeds and accomplishments. Acts are framed by an ideologically motivated language bearing on matters of descent, ascendancy, divine favour, and of the royal imperative of upholding culture by founding, renovating and providing for cultic installations. Seen from a modern perspective, royal commemorative inscriptions therefore serve many different purposes, and are often key for our understanding of chronology, relative lengths of individual rulers, and the geographical extent of a dynasty's influence. They are therefore quite ideal as tools for teaching, as they are formulaic and open for studies of cultural phenomena and historical processes. By comparison, not a single private commemorative inscription features in any of the published monographs intended for use in teaching elementary Sumerian.¹⁶

temple traditionally read é-sar. See photograph in Wilson 2012, pl. 66a. Other examples include only the name of the temple or the deity to whom an object had been donated.

14 So, e.g. van Driel, 1973b, 68.

15 See Gudme 2013, 30–36. In 1st millennium Babylonia, there are examples of votive tablets composed by young scribes as part of their education. In one example, potentially due to the tender age of the apprentice scribe, the tablet was sent into the temple with the aid of a porter. See George apud Civil 2010, 274–278.

16 A brief survey produces the following results of the number of “royal” inscriptions vis-à-vis other text types: Gadd 1924, 16 royal inscriptions vs. 11 literary texts; Volk 1999, 29 royal inscriptions vs. 15 legal and administrative texts; Hayes 2000, 44 royal inscriptions vs. 15 letters, legal and administrative texts. Royal is here used in a loose sense, as some texts in the aforementioned books are made up by seal inscriptions or clay bullae.

The earliest commemorative inscriptions dedicated by private individuals date to the Early Dynastic I–II period and are preceded by inscriptions on stone documenting ownership of parcels of land, which are not included in the present survey.¹⁷ Commemorative inscriptions share a basic function with the *kudurrus* in that they are directed at a future audience; and sometimes inscriptions documenting ownership of land parcels are found on statues, which form one of the basic material object categories on which commemorative inscriptions are found.¹⁸ The *kudurrus*, however, serve a legal-documentary purpose, while commemorative inscriptions focus on a person or a group of persons related by kinship or profession, and his/her/their motivations for offering or dedicating an object. In most cases a deity is mentioned; but in some, only the name of a temple in which the object was deposited is featured.¹⁹ The object material and type is decided upon, acquired, personalized, inscribed and deposited, and then presumably left to fulfil its purpose in a non-private context.

1.3 Limitations

The focus here is on inscriptions commissioned by private individuals, as far as these may be identified in the material. Bearing this in mind, some limitations are by necessity imposed upon the material. Further work on the sources is at any rate necessary, and this brief article merely hopes to showcase some considerations central to non-royals in their self-expressions.

All inscribed objects treated in the present investigation, unless otherwise stated, belong to the Early Dynastic and Sargonic periods. As far as can be ascertained they were all commissioned by private individuals. Inscriptions too damaged for assessing their private nature have been excluded completely. A more precise dating of objects is sometimes found in discussions, but in the charts below, the only distinction made is between Early Dynastic and Sargonic objects and inscriptions.²⁰

¹⁷ See, e.g. the inscribed statue Steible 1982, 201 (AnAgr. 4); with a discussion by Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 164–166.

¹⁸ See, e.g. the statue of Lupad of Umma, Zervos 1935, pl. 97, and the treatment, Gelb/Steinkeller/Whiting 1991, 72–74; and, with references to other relevant literature, Huh 2008, 276.

¹⁹ Here Early Dynastic Adab stands out from the rest with quite a few of the older inscriptions referring not to a divinity as recipient of the object, but only to the *é-sar-temple*. In some cases, the name of the temple appears to be the only thing inscribed, lacking even the name of the devotee(s). Compare the remark by Gudme 2013, 12: “In all instances we are dealing with a gift dedicated to a deity [...]”. The Adab material must be seen against the background of the specificities of early Mesopotamian religious consciousness where temples enjoyed widespread veneration, as seen from, e.g. the composition of the Sumerian Temple Hymns (Sjöberg/Bergmann 1969), and in scores of personal names (Stamm 1939, 85, 90–93; Andersson 2012, 203).

²⁰ On the problems of paleographic dating of Early Dynastic inscriptional material, see Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 119.

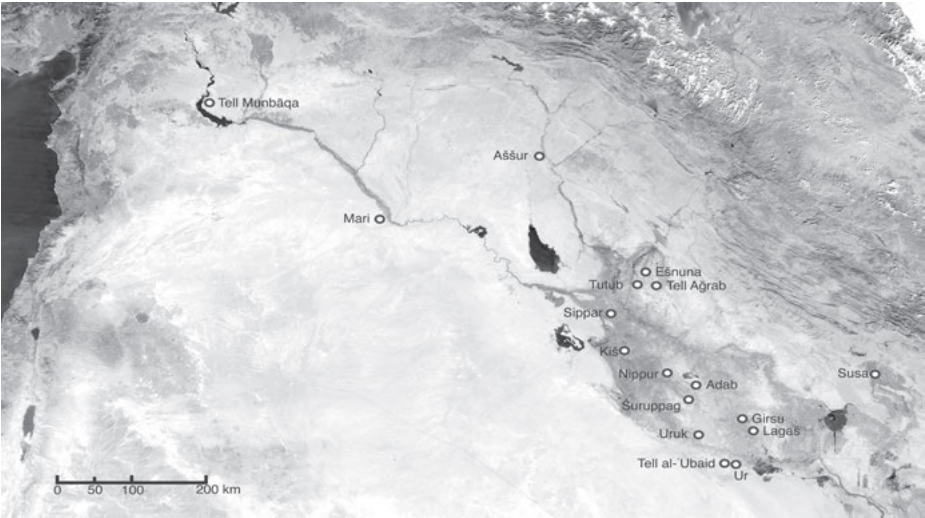


Fig. 1: Find-spots for Early Dynastic and Sargonic Period private commemorative inscriptions.

The denomination ‘private’ includes also queens, who may or may not have been born into royal families; either in a lineage parallel to the incumbent ruler, as a cousin or other relation, or as a daughter of a royal lineage from another (city-)state. Royal children are consistently excluded, however, though it is not always known whether

they were born before or after their father’s ascendancy to the throne in cases where the father represented the first exponent of a new lineage. One can not, of course, be entirely certain that high-ranking officials who appear in the inscriptional material did not, in fact, belong to a royal lineage, especially where damaged inscriptions are concerned.

Inscribed objects from Elam and Mari are as a rule not included among the primary materials, apart from the odd instance when an object is likely to have been transported to Susa in more recent times, but will sometimes be referred to for comparisons. Ebla has so far yielded no inscribed commemorative objects.²¹

Early Dynastic		Sargonic
14	Mace heads	8
3	Metal weapons	3
10	Plaques	2
1	Cylinder seals	2
38	Statues	1
113	Vessels	14

Fig. 2: Most common commemorative object types according to period.

²¹ I am grateful to Alfonso Archi for confirming in a personal communication the lack of such materials at Ebla.

2 Manufacture of the Commemorative Objects

At present, only little apart from the techniques applied can be said concerning the manufacture of commemorative objects during the third millennium BCE. For the most part, it is not known whether objects were produced to order, or whether clients normally chose a ready-made object from a selection in a craftsman's workshop.²²

2.1 Procurement of Raw Materials and Production Process

The inscription on a plaque of bituminous stone offered by a high official from ED Ġirsu states that the devotee played a part in securing the raw materials for the object, and could then influence the production process.²³ In another, damaged inscription on a statue, there is talk of something being brought from the 'Cedar Mountain',²⁴ which could well be an indication of where the raw material had been procured. Two other interesting instances are formed by a stone vessel and a votive cylinder seal offered by stone cutters, *bur-gul*, who may themselves have been involved in at least parts of the production of the objects.²⁵ As may a pair of stonemasons, *za dīm*, whose inscribed stone offerings are preserved.²⁶

An inscribed, crudely finished clay foot may represent an object which had a bearing on the wishes of the devotee; very likely asking to be healed from an affliction.²⁷ The poor quality of craftsmanship indicates that there is a high possibility of the object having been produced by a non-skilled person; such as the scribe who added the inscription or by a person who had it made, and then took it to a scribe to have it inscribed.

²² See Braun-Holzinger 1991, 2 with footnote 14 for evidence pointing to offerings of used metal daggers to the gods. Some general considerations on the origins of commemorative pieces can be found in Braun-Holzinger 1991, 11–13.

²³ Steible 1982a, 266 (Ent. 76); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 310 (W 9).

²⁴ Frayne 2008, 33–34 (E1.1.9.2001, seen in transliteration only).

²⁵ Gelb/Kienast 1990, 385 (Varia 19); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 355 and pl. 23 (S 4). Neither inscription features a remark like *mu(-na)-dīm*, 'he fashioned (it for DN)'.

²⁶ Steible 1982b (AnLag. 15); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 42 (K 2), is an inscription on a mace head by a lapidary, whose father is also qualified as such. For another example, see footnote 35, below.

²⁷ George 2011, no. 9. P. Steinkeller, who edited the text, suggested that the inscription *a-na ma-ši-AK* be read in Sumerian, in a way that implied a question from the devotee, "what should I do regarding myself?", *a-na mu-a-b-ši-(a)-k-e(n)*. The inscription would be without any 3rd millennium parallel. This type of anatomical object, is, however, well-known and the body parts pictured are many and varied, and are commonly understood as representing an afflicted part of the body; something that is very much in line with Steinkeller's interpretation, see further Gudme 2013, 15–16.

Tradesmen, *dam-gâr*, are attested as devotees in seven likely cases, all from the ED period. In two further cases, the devotee is the son of a *dam-gâr*.²⁸ Without overinterpreting this slight evidence, it is reasonable to assume that a trader had an insider's knowledge of goods moving in from abroad, and that the raw material for the finished product could have been selected at an early stage in the process. In some cases involving traders one might even assume that the material had been brought from abroad by the devotee himself in the line of exercising his profession. The fact that not a single *dam-gâr* appears in the published material dating to the Sargonic period is probably due to find circumstances, as the available number of commemorative inscriptions from the period is small compared to that of the preceding period.²⁹

Drafts for inscriptions on stone or metal are rare in the periods under scrutiny here.³⁰ A few royal inscriptions from ED IIIb Ġirsu and Lagaš have been suggested to be exercise pieces.³¹ In the private sphere, one piece presents itself as a potential draft: an unfinished building inscription of unknown provenience, probably meant to



Fig. 3: Inscription on fragmentary stone bowl from Sippar (after de Meyer 1980, pl. 27 no. 38).

be placed on a brick or a cone, but which might also represent an exercise.³² Another interesting example is shown in fig. 3; an inscribed ED IIIb stone bowl found during Rassam's soundings at Sippar where the name of the devotee was incised twice; the first time with demonstrably less ease than the second. The professional denomination 'scribe' was written only once.³³

If Rassam's soundings indeed were carried out at the site of the Ebabbar, the main temple in Sippar, as suggested by Aage Westenholz,³⁴ then the bowl was once dedicated there, regardless of the lack of a divine name and despite the repetition of the personal name.

²⁸ Steible 1982b, 194 (AnAdab 4); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 122 (G 38), ED IIIb Adab votive stone bowl; and Steible 1982b, 225–226 (Urenl 1); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 128 (G 76), ED IIIb Nippur dedicatory bowl mentioning Ur-Enlil, *énsi* of Nippur.

²⁹ See Foster 1977, 34 with footnote 34 and 36 with footnote 56, for examples of tradesmen making deliveries or payments of goods, animals and silver to the temple or state institutions.

³⁰ See for comparison, the draft version on a potsherd of an Old Babylonian mirrored cylinder seal inscription from Adab, Wilson 2012, 113 and pls. 28e and 110a.

³¹ See Biggs 1976, 36; Cooper 1980; and Cooper 1986, 24–25 (La 1.6).

³² George 2011, 8–9 and pl. 7, no. 8.

³³ de Meyer 1980, pl. 27 no. 38: *ur-dsu-da'*, *ur-dsu-da*, [dub]-sar; Braun-Holzinger 1991, 139 (G 146, "Versuchsstück?").

³⁴ Westenholz 2004, 599–600 with footnotes 5–6.

2.2 Reworking and Reuse of Commemorative Objects

In exceptional cases, a private individual is known to have donated more than one object.³⁵ Provided that the donations did not take place simultaneously, the opportunity for comparisons offer themselves. In a pair of ED IIIb inscriptions—one votive inscription on a stone plaque, the other a dedicatory inscription on a statue (fig. 4)—a certain Urakkila states his name and title, among other things. The key issue is the fact that the inscription on the statue has been edited at some point, altering the professional denomination.³⁶ As Braun-Holzinger remarks, there are reasons to assume also that the style of clothing worn by the person had been altered at some point;³⁷

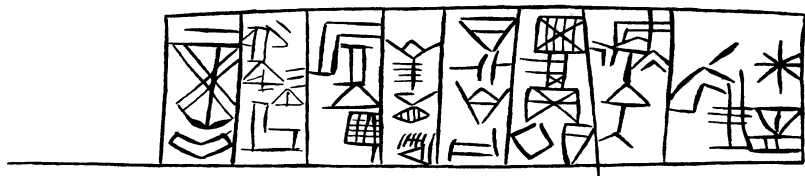


Fig. 4: Inscription on statue of Urakkila. Altering of title visible in line 7, second from the left (after Wilson 2012, 156).

and it could well be that this coincided with the change in titles of Urakkila. As both objects were dedicated to the same deity, Ninšubur, and supposedly deposited in her temple, it is clear that the statue could be removed and the inscription reformulated so as to comply with the upward-mobile Urakkila after his career change. The plaque, a fixture not so easily removed from the temple in which it had been deposited, kept the original formulation.

Another object that may exhibit secondary editing is an ED IIIb bowl found at Nippur (fig. 5).³⁸ It features two individual inscriptions commissioned by a pair,

35 E.g. Steible 1982b, 239–240 (AnNip. 24); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 132 (G 100), 311 (W 13), a limestone bowl and a gypsum plaque dating to the ED IIIa, featuring the same four-line inscription with the goddess NinsAR as recipient and the chief stone mason (zadim-gal) Lumma as the devotee. It is of interest here to note that the skill of carving demonstrated by the aforementioned plaque has been characterized by Donald P. Hansen “it seems not unfair to say that the carving represents some of the best work for plaques of this kind and gives a good indication of the style of the [ED IIIa] period”, (Hansen 1963, 164; with photo on pl. VI).

36 See already Westenholz *apud* Steible 1982b, 187–189 (Bar. 1), comm. to line 4; and Westenholz 2012, 155–156, with references to previous literature, and photos, pls. 99 and 112–113. The inscription is reproduced here courtesy of Aage Westenholz and Inger Jentoft.

37 Braun-Holzinger 1991, 242 (St 9): “eventuell wurde ein unfertiges Stück umgearbeitet oder während der Arbeit das Konzept geändert”.

38 Steible 1982b, 227–228 (AnNip. 2); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 129 (G 79).

husband and wife. The original inscription features fully framed writing cases in a straight column; the second has only line dividers, with the beginning of the lines drifting continuously upwards, toward the rim of the bowl. Obviously the spouse was not going to let the gift be donated without having both persons' names inscribed, and thereby the formula expressing the purpose of the donation was also changed ever so slightly.³⁹

Disregarding the Nippur bowl, the Urakkila statue inscription—along with the

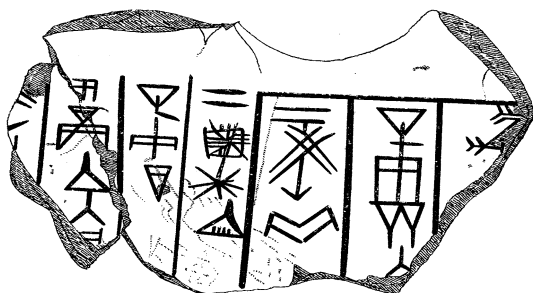


Fig. 5: Inscription on stone bowl from Nippur featuring the inscription of a husband and a wife. Husband's inscription on the right, with writing cases. Wife's addition to the left, with line dividers (after Hilprecht 1896, no. 98).

possible reworking of the look of the person depicted—poses a specific problem bearing on the function of the donated object, in that it presupposes continuous access to some objects, and a conceptual flexibility concerning the objects presented to gods. This Sumerian example is in contrast to interpretations of evidence from adjacent areas and cultures, at least where *access* to the objects after dedication is concerned.⁴⁰ Further possible indications of continued access to objects donated to a deity are

formed by two fragmentary inscribed bowls from the Early Dynastic cemetery at Ur.⁴¹ It is of course not entirely clear whether the persons buried with these vessels were indeed the original devotees; but the fact that these objects were encountered in a funerary, as opposed to a cultic, context, is worthy of note.

³⁹ The top inscription features the formula 𒀭 nam⁷-[ti], dam dumu-n[a-šè], a mu-ru, “for the life of his/her spouse and child(ren) (s)he offered (this vase to DN)”; while the bottom one has ája-bá-ra-an-na, dam-né, hē-ti-l[a-šè], [a] 𒀭 mu⁷-[ru], “Ajabara’ana, his/her spouse, for a ‘let live(gift)’ (s)he offered (this vase).” There is no second mention of the deity whose name is unfortunately broken off in the top inscription, along with the name of the primary devotee. The inscribed objects found in the same spot as this vase mention Ninlil, Enlil and Nintinuga.

⁴⁰ See Gudme 2013, 12, on the comparison between sacrifices and votive offerings: “Whether it is destroyed by fire, cast into a bog or put on display in the sanctuary the votive object is equally ‘spent’ from the point of view of the votary and just as irretrievable as if it had been burnt.”

⁴¹ One of these, a grey steatite bowl was said by the excavator, Sir Leonard Woolley, to have come “from a plundered PJ/B grave”, Woolley 1955, 203 (U 19241). The other, a shard of a limestone bowl, is noted as having come “from the gravesite at 5 m. depth”, Gadd/Legrain 1928, 71. For the inscriptions, see Steible 1982b, 281 (AnUr 4) and 282 (AnUr 6); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 141 (G 155, G 157), respectively. Did the owners die during the time of a restoration of the shrines in which the bowls were normally kept? The information is too scanty to draw any definitive conclusions.

Certain objects had more than one life. In particular—but surely not exclusively—one might think of objects connected with important personas of the past, linking the contemporary viewer or user to the history of the object itself. An object made of a material like stone, if treated with care, can last for centuries, and thus the persons coming into contact with the object, the processes and contexts in which it was produced and in which it had seen use, all add to the object's biography.⁴² An example of this is the bowl bearing a four-line inscription of Narām-Su'en of Akkade, later appropriated and re-inscribed by a daughter of Šulgi, ME-Enlil, a century or so afterwards, and found in Isin-Larsa-period layers of the Gipar at Ur.⁴³ It is probably relevant to note that neither ME-Enlil's nor Narām-Su'en's inscription featured the name of a divinity, and that neither featured a finite verb. Other objects which were reinscribed include those taken as booty during military campaigns, which demonstrates a different use of historical materials.⁴⁴

There are, so far, no clear third-millennium examples of such appropriated objects once presented to deities by private individuals being reinscribed and presented by another person to another deity in another city.⁴⁵

3 The Written Message

Commemorative inscriptions are not flawless in any respect. Writing is often unwieldy and distributed over a surface that is very different from the smooth and malleable clay of clay tablets.

3.1 Script

The persons performing the task of putting to writing the message on an object were with all likelihood not part of the scribal, educated elite of the cities, but craftsmen used to working with metal or stone.⁴⁶ This may sometimes lead to confusion as

⁴² See, e.g. Gosden/Marshall 1999 for a discussion of this phenomenon.

⁴³ Braun-Holzinger 1991, 161–162 (G 213D), and 188 (G 358), with previous literature.

⁴⁴ E.g. Steible 1982b, 295 (Enšak. 2), inscriptions on stone bowl fragments found at Nippur, stated to have been brought from a conquered Kiš; and Kienast/Sommerfeld 1994, 283–284 sub voce šallatum. See other royal examples in Goodnick-Westenholz 2012.

⁴⁵ Steible 1982b, 260 (AnNip. 63); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 137 (G 129), a stone bowl from ED IIIb Nippur, is probably rather a royal than a private inscription. No personal or divine name is preserved. The remaining lines begin toward the very end of the inscription; lines 1'–2': bur maḥ ṛma^ṛ-[rī^{ki}-ta?] mu-na-ta-e₁₁, nam-ti-la-n[i-... rest broken]. Compare Steible 1982a, 247–248 (Ent. 32), ii 3'–4': bur maḥ, kur-ta mu-na-ta-e₁₁; and comment by Braun-Holzinger 1991, 100.

⁴⁶ For some thoughts on this matter, see Klein 1986, 7. On mu-sar and gab-sar, the titles of the professionals performing the engraving, see Westenholz 1987, 36, note to no. 11 ii 12.

to which sign is really intended. Writing found on stone objects is sometimes very superficial, with signs scratched into stone at varying depths, making some stand out less clearly than others. To a modern editor, this can sometimes bring about the dismissal of certain signs as mistakes;⁴⁷ or reading scratches as intentional signs.⁴⁸ On the opposite side of things, a thin gold sheet found at Adab carrying an inscription mentioning Narām-Su'en of Akkade is a fine exception.⁴⁹ The signs are impressed into the elastic surface of the piece with such skill, and with the heads of wedges so clearly visible, that it may have been inscribed by a regular scribe.

As a rule, the earliest known examples of commemorative inscriptions do not demonstrate any differences in the execution of sign forms between private and royal inscriptions. But it is interesting to note that during the Sargonic period, the absolute majority of private commemorative inscriptions feature the special, “archaizing” appearance of the sign *lugal* with a rounded “back”, as commonly used by the Sargonic kings in their own inscriptions.⁵⁰ This indicates the possibility that, at times at least, some form of standard or preference for writing specific signs can be assumed.

3.2 Orthography

Bearing in mind that the basis of this contribution comprises textual witnesses from more than half a millennium, only a few points on orthography relevant to the investigation will be commented upon. A fuller investigation needs to take the royal inscriptional material into consideration to a higher extent, as well as texts of other genres for comparison.

⁴⁷ Compare Luckenbill 1914, pl. 1 and Luckenbill 1930, pl. 2, where the reading of line 5 differs between the two editions. The first edition should be given precedence over the second.

⁴⁸ As in the ED IIIb Uruk votive vase inscription by princess Megirimta, daughter of Lugalkisalsi, presented to the deity NE.DAG. An oblique scratch between the signs DINGIR and NE has been interpreted as intentional in some treatments. Moreover, the statement by Banks 1904, 62–63, that the vase should have borne an earlier, erased inscription has been refuted by close inspection and close-up photo of the object. See comment and overview of previous literature in Frayne 2008, 424 (E1.14.15.3), and photo on <http://www.themorgan.org/collections/works/writteninstone/>. For an interpretation of the function of NE.DAG and an Ebla correspondence, see Andersson 2013.

⁴⁹ Gelb/Kienast 1990, 111 (Narāmsîn B 9); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 378 (Varia 10). Photo in Wilson 2012, pl. 40a.

⁵⁰ This applies both to the sign *lugal* when used as a title, and as part of the name of Šarkališarrē. Exceptions are formed by the inscription on an alabaster bowl, Gelb/Kienast 1990, 118 (Šarkališarrī B 2); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 164 (G 225, “Duktus altertümlich”); and on a limestone plaque, Gelb/Kienast 1990, 297–299 (Gutium 4); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 314 (W 23). Add to these latter two also the clay copies of original dedicatory inscriptions of a saġa of Zabala, edited in Marchesi 2011. For the monumental paleography of the sign *lugal*, see Foster 1985, 24–25.

Like contracts, commemorative inscriptions were designed to fulfil an enduring function; in the case of the latter, bearing witness to the pious behaviour of a particular person over time. Diakonoff remarked in the mid-1970s that the contracts from Early Dynastic IIIa Šuruppak (Fara) tend to contain fuller writings of verbal chains compared to the, presumably, contemporary administrative records from the same site.⁵¹ And M. Lambert, writing about the same group of documents remarked that the contracts often left out grammatical components that were, however, incorporated in the personal names featured in those texts.⁵²

Personal names were evidently abbreviated in different economic contexts. Persons appearing in the documentation of an institution, archive or dossier could sometimes figure with fuller writings of names which were in other cases, within the same archival context, abbreviated.⁵³ Closer study of the commemorative inscriptions indicates that, as far as can be ascertained from contemporary documents, names are not written out in fuller forms than is the case generally in economic archival documents.

3.3 Written Representations of the Devotees

Filiations and professional titles occur with such regularity, that it may be possible to see these as identifying markers of the individuals in relation to their respective social and professional context,⁵⁴ which reminds of the use of filiations and titles in administrative circumstances. But the question as to whom these identifying markers were meant to be seen by, the devotee's contemporaries, the divinity to whom the object was dedicated, or by both, is a question that does not hold much promise of ever receiving a definitive answer.

The table above recounts professional denominations encountered as qualifying more than two individuals in the private inscriptional material. As related earlier, tradesmen, *dam-gār* or *dam-gārgal*, are found as devotees in seven likely cases, with two further instances being an object offered by a son of a *dam-gār*. All cases date to the ED period. During this time, other professions that feature more often than other professional denominations include temple administrators, *saġa* or *saġa-maḥ*—whose families are also found in the material.⁵⁵ Other professions

⁵¹ Diakonoff 1976, 105–106.

⁵² M. Lambert 1971, 45 with footnote ****. See also Andersson 2012, 62 with footnote 310; 146.

⁵³ See Andersson 2012, 62–64. For an abbreviation in a Sargonic period private archive, see Westenholz 1987, 61 note to no. 44 ii 1, and compare Andersson 2012, 139 with footnote 777.

⁵⁴ For a detailed discussion of gender and professional titles occurring in Early Dynastic statuary from Mari, Nippur and the Diyālā area, and their bearing on social identities, see Evans 2012, 179–202.

⁵⁵ E.g. Steible 1982b, 250–251 (AnNip 46); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 135 (G 114), ED IIIa Nippur, AK-ni, wife of 'Ilum-'alšu *saġa*; Steible 1982a, 275 (Enz 2); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 241 (St 4), Geme-Bau,

Early Dynastic		Sargonic
7	saĝa /-maḥ	3
4	dub-sar /-maḥ	6
7	dam-gār /-gal	–
–	šabra é	5
4	sa ₁₂ -sug ₅	–
4	sukkal /-maḥ	–

Fig. 6: Occupations of devotees according to period. Each individual devotee counted only once.

two different inscriptions, copied onto a clay tablet.⁵⁹ The importance of the office of saĝa is apparent from the combination of the saĝa title with that of énsi during the Sargonic period.⁶⁰

encountered are land recorders, sa₁₂-sug₅, and a form of civil servant, the sukkal or sukkal-maḥ. Scribes, dub-sar, appear as devotees in four inscriptions.

In the Sargonic period, there are no tradesmen attested in the corpus of commemorative inscriptions. Instead, the most commonly encountered professional groups are scribes or scribally trained individuals, and administrators of royal and temple households, like the šabra é, in Akkadian *šāper bētim*.⁵⁶ Such educated professionals sometimes belonged to the very top echelons of Sargonic society.⁵⁷ The temple administrator saĝa is still well-attested in the material, considering the relative dearth of Sargonic inscriptions compared to Early Dynastic ones.⁵⁸ One saĝa of the Early Sargonic period, furthermore, is attested with

3.4 Object Specifications and Object Names

In some cases the inscriptions make overt reference to the object itself. When that is the case, it is interesting to see where the object itself is mentioned. In about half of the instances, it is found at the very beginning of the inscription. This applies to

daughter of Enentarzi, saĝa of Ninĝirsu. For the father and grandmother of a saĝa from ED IIIb Uruk, see further below, with footnote 76.

⁵⁶ An example combining the two titles of dub-sar and šabra é is known, Gelb/Kienast 1990, 106–107 (Narāmsîn B 2); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 259 (St 98).

⁵⁷ For Classic Sargonic Nippur, see Westenholz 1999, 51.

⁵⁸ A daughter of a saĝa, ME-šuni, is represented with a metal bowl found in a hoard of precious objects at Tell Munbāqa, Gelb/Kienast 1990, 384 (Varia 18); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 167 (G 242).

⁵⁹ Marchesi 2011.

⁶⁰ For a Classic Sargonic Nippur example, see Westenholz 1987, 28. For Classic Sargonic Adab, and late Early Dynastic period Lagaš and Umma saĝa-officials acting as or becoming énsis, see references in Andersson 2012, 40–41 with footnote 195 and 41.

bowls, bur,⁶¹ bur umbin,⁶² and a mace head ^{giš}ku_x(lum),⁶³ which are all written at the very beginning of the text where one would normally expect a divine name. A few objects, in contrast, mention the object type where it could be expected, further on in the inscription. The objects are a votive dagger handle which features the sign ^{gi}ir after the name of the devotee and his father, but before the name of the recipient deity;⁶⁴ a stone vessel featuring the word níĝ ‘bowl’ after the broken name and title of a person, before the name of the deity to whom it was offered;⁶⁵ a mace head šíta(-dím-ma);⁶⁶ a votive seal of speckled stone, kišib piriĝ-gùnu, written after the name of the recipient;⁶⁷ and a statue dedicated by Narām-Su’en’s major domo Šu’ā(i) š-takal, which has the term for image, dūl, just before the main verb.⁶⁸ In inscriptions on ED III Mari statues both placements are found, but the placement after the name of the devotee predominates.⁶⁹

By comparison, not a single royal inscription which preserves mention of the medium places it at the beginning of the text. The instances when objects are mentioned at the very beginning of texts should perhaps be taken as evidence of the importance to the devotees of the act of presentation to a god or goddess. The phenomenon of topicalization is well-known in Sumerian inscriptions with regards to the deity who stands as receiver of the object or deed commemorated in the inscription.⁷⁰ The difference here is that it is the direct object that pushes its way to the fore.

One may thus contrast this placement of the object at the head in some of these private inscriptions with the regular placement in royal inscriptions, closer to the predicate toward the end of the inscription in inscriptions from ED IIIb onwards.⁷¹

It was not common for private individuals during the periods inspected here to provide an object with a name. A statue from the Adab area carries in the final paragraph, after the verbal phrase, an addition which bears on the functionality of the

61 Steible 1982b, 247 (AnNip. 39); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 134 (G 107), ED IIIa Nippur.

62 Lambert 1976, 191; Foster 1991, 184 no. 6; Braun-Holzinger 1991, 150 (G 192), ED IIIa-b, unknown provenience.

63 Gelb/Kienast 1990, 372 (Varia 4); Grégoire 2000, pl. 171 (Ashm 1937–650); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 51 (K 39), MS-CS Kiš.

64 Gelb/Kienast 1990, 372 (Varia 5); Grégoire 2000, pl. 171 (Ashm 1937–651); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 91 (MW 19), CS Kiš. Inscription is mirrored.

65 George 2011 no. 1, ED IIIa, unknown provenience. The use of níĝ for ‘bowl’ is unusual. For the rationale of the reading, see Bauer 1987–1990, notes to 120 II 3K and 146 IV 2.

66 Krebernik 1994, 5–12, with comments on the term(s) šíta(-dím-ma), 11–12.

67 Braun-Holzinger 1991, 355 and pl. 23 (S 3), MS-CS, unknown provenience.

68 Gelb/Kienast 1990, 106–107 (Narāmsîn B 2); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 259 (St 98), CS Susa.

69 See overview in Kienast/Sommerfeld 1994, 273–275 (*šalmum*), writing DūL.

70 An overview of the syntactic structures of third millennium royal inscriptions is Klein 2010. For the phenomenon of topicalization, see his references on p. 173, n. 6.

71 E.g. the references collected by Braun-Holzinger 1991, 100 (citing G 7, 8, 10, 62, 129; 107 and 192 private). For a Sargonic example, see Gelb/Kienast 1990, 98 (Narāmsîn 13); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 160–161 (G 208); bur in line 5 is certain.

statue, x-šùd-[d]è arḥuš tuku, mu-bi “Have mercy through (my) prayers, is its name”.⁷² The damaged dedicatory section at the beginning of the inscription mentions Meskigal, who served as governor of Adab in late Early Dynastic and Early Sargonic times; it furthermore preserves a dedicatory phrase mentioning the offering as benefitting the devotee’s wife and children. The name of the devotee himself is damaged, and there is no visible title or filiation. The only other clear example of a private inscription mentioning the name of an object is a statue from Mari, offered by a royal cupbearer.⁷³ In both these examples, the name of the statue is placed at the end of the inscriptions, after the finite verb.

After the Sargonic period, named commemorative objects are increasingly often associated with private individuals.⁷⁴ But the rule for southern Mesopotamian Early Dynastic and Sargonic objects is that they are either offered by rulers or their immediate next of kin, or dedicated for the life of the ruler.⁷⁵

3.5 Motivation: Occasion and Intention

The occasions on which commemorative objects were commissioned by private individuals are as a rule not expressed. A statue from ED IIIb Uruk is an exception, where it is said that the father and grandmother of Aka, a saĝa of the god Utu, had offered the statue out of reverence at the time when Ninimma called or appointed Aka.⁷⁶ Royal inscriptions, on the other hand, may, as has been alluded to above, mention that an object had been taken as booty during a campaign to remote lands or even further to home. Since building activities are sometimes mentioned not only on foundation deposits, the inscriptions on other objects may allude to provisioning for the local cults, in keeping with the traditional tasks for a ruler.

If the occasion is most often left unexpressed in private inscriptions, the wishes that accompany the objects are very often expressed. The term for an ‘ex-voto’ gift was related to the concept of prolonging one’s life and presence before a god, as can be seen in the term used for votive objects from this time on, ga-ti-la, originally a frozen verbal clause in the first person, ‘let me live’, ‘may I live’, or the like.⁷⁷ The verb ti has

⁷² Frayne 2008, 33–34 (E1.1.9.2001, seen in transliteration only); following in essence Frayne’s rendering of lines ii 1’–2’.

⁷³ Gelb/Kienast 1990, 19–20 (MP 25); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 246 (St 32).

⁷⁴ See list in Radner 2005, 43–59.

⁷⁵ Behrens/Steible 1983, 235–236, sub voce mu I, 6.; 282, sub voce sa₄, 1.; Kienast/Sommerfeld 1994, 150 sub voce mu-(šè)-sa₄.

⁷⁶ Steible 1982b, 339–340 (AnUruk 1); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 253 (St 75). As Bauer has remarked (1985a, 150, with references) -e in the personal name on lines 5 and 10 is to be read *-šè. Photo and copy in Falkenstein 1963, pls. 5–6, 1.

⁷⁷ The term is exclusively used in direct connection to the devotee him- or herself, never in connection with other persons, as could be expected from the etymology of the word.

a decided overtone of linking a person to a certain locus since the verb is equated not only with the Akkadian verb *balātu* ‘to live’, but also with *ašābu* ‘to dwell’.⁷⁸ The sense and usage of the term is then very much in keep with the idea of commemoration; serving to prolong the memory of a person in the presence of the recipient by means of a personalized, offered object.

Inscriptions that feature the name of the devotee often bear a votive purpose clause, *nam-ti-l-ani-šè/-da* ‘for his/her (own) life’, or a dedicatory purpose clause *nam-ti PN(-ak)-šè/-da* ‘for the life of person so-and-so’, and quite regularly spouse and children are also mentioned.⁷⁹ This phraseology is attested from at least the beginning of the ED IIIb onwards. A single inscription from ED IIIb Ur seems to express the dedicatory sense without inclusion of a nominal compound including the verb *ti* ‘to live’;⁸⁰ and an ED IIIb inscription from Lagaš uses the noun *zi* instead of *nam-ti*, with no discernible semantic differentiation.⁸¹

Only once are a parent and siblings mentioned in such a connection, in a Classic Sargonic building inscription on a cone. The passage is phrased as if the deity had already granted long life for the builder and his kin. There is no votive formula, since the text commemorates the building of a temple.⁸²

Not a single anonymous inscription bears the *nam-ti*-clause, and it is highly unlikely that such an example will ever be found in the future due to the phraseology and the innate logical reference to a named devotee. The functionality of the gift, as expressed by both object and inscription, was intimately linked to the person offering it, and, when inscribed, both the offered object and its accompanying inscription served to commemorate the act of offering.

In a number of cases, persons unrelated to the devotees are also mentioned, as primary or even as sole beneficiaries of the positive effects triggered by the act of donation. The latter is the case with an inscribed ED IIIb mace head dedicated for the life of Enanatum, ruler (*énsi*) of Lagaš, lord (*lugal*) of the devotee, Barakiba,

⁷⁸ Behrens/Steible 1983, 121, sub voce *ga-ti-la*, with references; and Bauer 1972, 479.

⁷⁹ In one ED IIIb Nippur inscription on a stone bowl, it is likely that the devotee left out an overt reference to himself, but mentioning the offering as having been performed for the life of his spouse and offspring, Steible 1982b, 232 (AnNip. 8); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 130 (G 85). Balke 2006, 97–98, has argued that the variants, with comitative *-da* or terminative *-šè* should be seen as complementary strategies of linking the offered object to the devotee and other beneficiaries, with little, if any difference in semantic nuance.

⁸⁰ Steible 1982b, 274–275 (Aan. 3); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 140 (G 150). There is hardly any room at the beginning of line 4’ to house *nam* and *ti*, even if they were written one above the other as is the case with the signs *zi* and *ka* in the following line.

⁸¹ Donbaz 1997, 46 B: 1’–2’ [...] *zi dam ʾdumu-ne-neʾ-šè, a mu-na-šè-ru* “for the life of his wife and children, he dedicated (this dagger)”, following the translation of Donbaz, who, however, read the quite clear sign *zi* as [na]m-ti. For *zi* corresponding to Akkadian *napištu*, see e.g. CAD N/1, 296–297.

⁸² George 2011, 15–17, and pl. 10, no. 13; following Steinkeller’s treatment of the text.

the *sukkal*.⁸³ Judging from the available evidence, it is most often—if not always—a matter of persons with a higher relative rank in society than the devotee him- or herself. When a superior is mentioned as a beneficiary, that person's name seems always to be in the primary position, before any other beneficiaries, including the devotee him- or herself. In two instances, the relation between devotee and a secondary beneficiary is unclear.⁸⁴ Below is a diagram illustrating the relative distribution of votive and dedicatory purpose clauses expressly stating for whose benefit the object had been offered in Early Dynastic and Sargonic commemorative inscriptions.

As can be readily seen from the above, it was more common in Sargonic times to dedicate objects for the express benefit of someone. Just under a third, 31 per cent of all Sargonic inscriptions, feature a votive or dedicatory clause mentioning an offering made for the lives of one or more persons, as against just under 21 per cent in Early Dynastic times. It should be remembered, though, that such formulae are found only toward the end of the Early Dynastic period, and that a higher percentage of Early Dynastic commemorative inscriptions are damaged in critical places.

Judging from the extant material, it appears to have been more common in the Sargonic period to dedicate an object to a superior. Six out of eleven inscriptions from the period featuring a votive or dedicatory clause for the lives of one or more persons

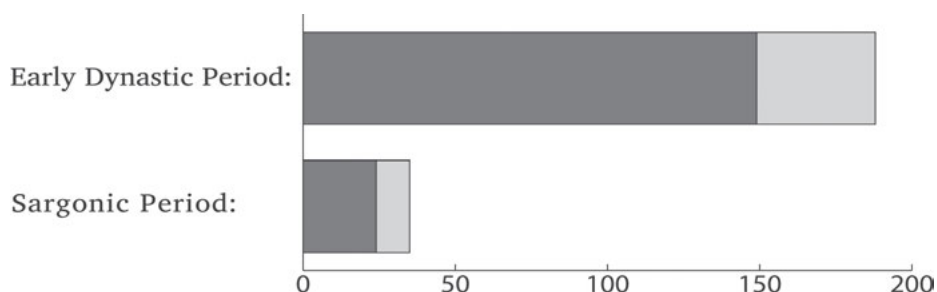


Fig. 7: Proportions of inscriptions mentioning an offering for the life of one or more persons (light grey) in relation to inscriptions lacking such formulae (dark grey), according to period. Total number of inscriptions, Early Dynastic period 188 inscriptions; Sargonic period 35 inscriptions.

⁸³ Steible 1982a, 190–191 (En. I 19); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 42 (K 1). See correct reading of personal name of devotee in Bauer 1985a.

⁸⁴ A Sargonic inscription on a bowl from Nippur offered by a chief scribe, a *dub-sar-maḥ*, mentions as primary beneficiary the *saĝa* of Enlil, Urunabadbi, in secondary position himself, in tertiary position a person not further qualified, Ama'abzi, and in quaternary position his wife and child(ren), Gelb/Kienast 1990, 108–109 (Narāmsīn B 5); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 163 (G 222). An even less clear example is offered by the inscription on a mace head, Gelb/Kienast 1990, 384 (Varia 17); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 50 (K 37), which has a person Uruna dedicating the mace for the life of Ezi. Neither person is further qualified, and no deity is indicated. The provenience of the latter piece is unknown.

carried a dedicatory formula mentioning the king, someone loosely characterized as the *lugal* of the devotee,⁸⁵ or a superior of the devotee;⁸⁶ amounting to roughly 17 percent of all known private inscriptions from the time. The corresponding figure for inscriptions from the Early Dynastic period mentioning the life of a *lugal* or an *énsi* in a dedicatory clause is just over five per cent, or ten inscriptions in total. Another nine Sargonic period inscriptions make explicit mention of the name of the king, often in a clause expressing the devotee's relation to the king as 'his servant', *warassu*. The name of the king is only mentioned outside of a dedicatory context in four Early Dynastic inscriptions, all by queens then referring to their husbands.⁸⁷

The figures for both periods of inscriptions mentioning the dedication for the life of a spouse and/or offspring lies around eight and a half percent of the total number of inscriptions.

In Early Dynastic times, rulers could also offer objects for the express benefit of their own lives. Some 20 different inscriptions on several dozen objects are known, commissioned by ED IIIb rulers of Lagaš, Nippur and by Lugalzagesi, Umma and Uruk.⁸⁸ In one single instance, the Lagaš ruler Enmetena dedicated a vase in Nippur for the sake of his own life, for the life of the city of Lagaš, and for the life of someone or something, which is unfortunately broken away.⁸⁹ This unique instance may be compared to inscriptions from the early second millennium BCE, where the inclusion of a city's name in such formulations is found more regularly.⁹⁰

In the Sargonic period, dedications of objects for the sake of the life of the king thus saw a proportional increase in relation to the number of private commemorative objects known from this period. Adding the number of references to the king outside of dedicatory phrases, the numbers rise drastically. Even when taking into account the unevenness in distribution of such formulae in the preceding period, toward the end of Early Dynastic times, the geographical distribution of objects throughout the

⁸⁵ The only inscription not mentioning an incumbent king of Akkade is Gelb/Kienast 1990, 297–299 (Gutium 4); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 314 (W 23), dedicated for the life of the prince ŠaraTiGuBišin, the devotee's 'lugal'. For the identity of ŠaraTiGuBisin, see Westenholz 2009–2011.

⁸⁶ See reference to the Nippur bowl in footnote 84, above.

⁸⁷ It is interesting to note that the Early Dynastic material from Mari reflects the Sargonic usage of mentioning the name of the king. See Gelb/Kienast 1990, 9–14 (MP 8–10, 12–15), inscriptions on six statues and a single vase (MP 10). Worthy of note is of course the fact that other, more anonymous ED inscriptions might originally have contained references to incumbent rulers in damaged parts of the inscriptions, or rulers who have not yet been identified as such in complementary sources. For a list of identified and proposed ED rulers, see Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 118–128.

⁸⁸ E.g. Steible 1982a, 189–190 (En. I 18); Steible 1982b, 226–227 (Urenl. 2), 299–301 (Lukin. 2).

⁸⁹ Steible 1982a, 247–248 (Ent. 32); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 116–117 (G 8).

⁹⁰ For Assur, see, e.g. Grayson 1987, 14 (A.O.31.1, Šalim-aḫum), 23–25 (A.O.33.3, Erišum I). Probably also to be restored on page 43 (A.O.34.2, Ikūnum), following Grayson. Compare also the inscription of Ilum-mūtappil of Dēr mentioning the life of his land, Frayne 1990, 678–679 (E4.12.2.2). See generally Galter 1998, 14–17 on this type of formula during the early second millennium BCE.

Sargonic empire hints at an increased focus on the king's own persona. Sargonic kings themselves, however, never presented objects to deities for the express sake of their own life. That this Early Dynastic Sumerian tradition and phraseology ought to have been known by the Sargonic kings is evidenced by the fact that people in close contact with the Sargonic court dedicated objects for the sake of the king's life.⁹¹

Manfred Krebernik has presented arguments for reading two passages on an Old Babylonian tablet containing copies of two original inscriptions commissioned by Rīmuš, in a way that would provide a unique example of a motivational factor in a Sargonic royal inscription.⁹² The two passages read in the same manner:

a-na, ^den-líl, ša-lí-mi-šu, a mu-ru

Krebernik suggested that the word in the third line of the passage could be understood as a noun augmented by the terminative ending /iś/, followed by the possessive pronominal suffix 3ms -šu. Earlier interpretations favoured an interpretation of *ša-lí-mi-šu* as an apposition to the name of Enlil, *šalimīšu*; a nominal formation which bears on Enlil's support for Rīmuš.⁹³ Krebernik, on the other hand, wanted to raise doubts as to the identity of the noun underlying the orthography, suggesting instead an interpretation of *šalimīš-šu* (*šalimīš-šu*), „für sein Wohl“?, indicating a purpose that is otherwise not expressed in the Sargonic royal corpus.⁹⁴ Examples of the terminative ending /iś/ with possessive pronominal suffixes are not very common in Sargonic Akkadian texts but show a preference for expressing the double sibilant sequence /śś/ explicitly.⁹⁵ The choice of an interpretation must be seen in light of the more common orthography and the fact that not a single instance of a phrase recording that an object was donated by a Sargonic king for the purpose of (prolonging) his own life is known; neither in original inscriptions of Sargonic kings, nor in later copies of their inscriptions. Hence, the earlier interpretations seem better suited for understanding this phrase correctly.

⁹¹ A good example is furnished by the previously mentioned statue inscription of Narām-Su'en's major domo, Šu'ā(i)š-takal, Gelb/Kienast 1990, 106–107 (Narāmsin B 2); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 259 (St 98).

⁹² Krebernik 1991, 141, note to Rīmuš C 1: 86 and C 6: 698.

⁹³ Poebel 1914, 191: “Enlil, his ally”; Hirsch 1963, 54 (Rīmuš b 1): “Enlil, seinem Helfer (?)”; 64 (Rīmuš b 7): “Enlil, seinem «Helfer»”; Sollberger/Kupper 1971, 101 (IIA2b), 103 (IIA2d): “Enlil, (le dieu) qui lui accorde son amitié”; Gelb/Kienast 1991, 193 (Rīmuš C 1): “Enlil, seinem Helfer”; and 208–209 (Rīmuš C 6): “Enlil, seinem «Helfer»”; Franke 1995, 136, column 2 (“DN(D)+App.”), and discussion p. 138.

⁹⁴ Krebernik's suggestion was taken up by Frayne 1993, 49 (E2.1.2.4); 54 (E2.1.2.6), who put the phrase in cursive script but removed the questionmark “for his well-being”.

⁹⁵ Hasselbach 2005, 181, with examples. For a pair of examples from later copies of original Sargonic inscriptions, see Kienast/Sommerfeld 1994, 265 sub voce *qātum*.

4 Conclusions

This preliminary study has shown that the Mesopotamian material in many respects can be compared to commemorative materials from other places and periods. It also underlines the need for a more intensive study of these sources. The following represents only a few details which have been the focus of the present study.

The evidence from Mesopotamia is in keep with observations from elsewhere, that the purpose of inscribed offerings is to prolong the presence of a person in front of a deity, thereby extending the benefits given in return over time. The Sumerian word for 'ex-voto' gift, *ga-ti-la*, relates to ideas of life as well as physical presence and so in itself aptly summarized the ideas behind the offering of gifts to gods.

A few objects indicate possible reworking of the inscriptions, and in the case of a statue from the Adab area, the object ought reasonably to have been removed from the place where it had originally been deposited. The implications are interesting but the practice may be considered unique. Other inscriptions indicate re-use of inscribed or uninscribed pieces; though how common this practice was at any given period is difficult to say. It does indicate, however, that in Mesopotamia, commemorative objects could have several lives, and that the functionality of the re-donated piece was considered to be no less than when it was originally donated.

A few significant differences between private and royal inscribed offerings include the placement of the signifying noun relating to the object itself, which may sometimes appear at the beginning of private inscriptions; in contrast to its placement in royal inscriptions.

The occasion on which an object was presented to a god is rarely alluded to. But the motivation for presenting objects for the sake of prolonging one's own life, or the lives of others, including that of a superior or of one's spouse and offspring, is evident from the ED IIIb period onwards. While this practice is seen also in Early Dynastic Sumerian inscriptions, it is in all likelihood never explicitly stated in Sargonic period royal inscriptions.

This latter practice of dedicating objects on behalf of others has a clear bearing on the materiality of the inscribed objects. In a number of cases, the donation of objects served to underline and strengthen social bonds between individuals; be it within the family or between subordinates and their superiors. This was done within a framework of the religious superstructure which guided many other aspects of communal and individual life in the Ancient Near East. A further subdivision of commemorative objects into votive and dedicatory serves to pinpoint the inscriptions in which the relations between individuals and their surroundings are brought to the fore. These inscriptions may, then, add more to our understanding of the social relations of individuals in these societies, and the means at their disposal to express and strengthen social bonds.

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Thomas E. Balke

The Interplay of Material, Text, and Iconography in Some of the Oldest “Legal” Documents

Among the earliest written documentation from third millennium BC Mesopotamia, recorded shortly after the overwhelmingly administrative documentation (c. 85%) from the Late Uruk and Jemdet Nasr periods (3300–3000 BC),¹ we find an equally intriguing and intricate group of script-bearing objects, usually referred to in the scholarly literature as ‘ancient kudurrus’. These objects seem to be well suited for the purpose of investigating the interplay of material, text, and associated iconography, an approach only rarely intensively pursued among Assyriologists.²

The appearance of a seminal volume dealing extensively with this special group of records has contributed a great deal to reviving the issue of the relation of these early land-sale documents to the later kudurrus, i.e. boundary stones, from second millennium BC Babylonia.³ This unique group of texts (see ELTS nos. 1–12 and 18) on the one hand consists of several stone tablets (ELTS nos. 1–7) with a convex obverse and reverse, a peculiar shape not found in any other group of texts from any other period or area,⁴ and two further stone objects formed like animals, i.e. a recumbent sheep (ELTS no. 8) and a lion-headed bird (ELTS no. 9). On the other hand, there are three quite exceptional stone artefacts with associated iconography (ELTS nos. 10+11, 12, 18), on which I will focus *in extenso* below. Formally, the rather tablet-like stone objects, i.e. ELTS 1–7, generally display vertically arranged columns with

This article emerged from the Heidelberg Collaborative Research Center 933 “Material Text Cultures. Materiality and Presence of Writing in Non-Typographic Societies”. The CRC 933 is financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG). I am indebted to D. Sürenhagen for bringing J. Boese’s recent archaeological treatment of the ‘Blau’schen Steine’ (cf. Boese 2010) to my attention. Palaeographic references follow the numbers in A. Deimel’s “*Liste der archaischen Keilschriftzeichen*” (Leipzig, 1922), henceforth abbreviated as LAK, M. Green and H. Nissen, *Zeichenliste der archaischen Texte aus Uruk* (Berlin, 1987), henceforth ZATU, and E. Burrows’ *Sign List* (pls. 1–36), henceforth SL, of the archaic texts from Ur (cf. Burrows, UET 2 [1935]). Sumerian personal names are consequently given with translations—despite the immanent imponderables—in order to impart some clues of the hidden connotative patterns.

1 Note that about 15% of the Uruk IV–III tablets are of the lexical genre; whereas Uruk IV tablets exclusively derive from the site Uruk, those of the Jemdet Nasr period (= Uruk III) come from a number of different Mesopotamian sites, including Jemdet Nasr, Kish, Larsa, Tall Uqair and Tell Asmar.

2 See especially Selz 2003, 2004a and 2004b.

3 Gelb/Steinkeller/Whiting 1991, esp. 21–24, henceforth abbreviated as ELTS; Paulus 2014.

4 But note the extreme variation found in ELTS 4, showing an approximately spherical or cubical shape by its nearly identical thickness, length, and width.

writing running consecutively from top to the bottom—partly continuing on the edges (e.g. ‘Philadelphia Tablet’ [= ELTS 3]) and partly with additional sub-columns (e.g. ‘Hoffman Tablet’ [= ELTS 1])—, to be read from left to right.⁵

This whole group of inscribed objects is usually considered the earliest recorded exchange of property, characteristically mentioning

- a certain plot of land followed by specific measurements,
- a concrete location,
- the specific sign group DUG(KAŠ/TIN)+SĪLA,⁶ but strikingly lacking in the stone artefacts under consideration (ELTS nos. 10+11, 12, 18), and
- the names of individuals, possibly the names of the buyer and the seller(s).⁷

This particular class of artefacts showed up from the very beginning of the third millennium BC and can be dated approximately to the Early Dynastic I period (2900–2750 BC) based mainly on palaeographic grounds though, as will be discussed hereinafter, with gradual differences.

Within this group of records there are three quite exceptional artefacts (cf. Table 1) carved on stone:⁸

⁵ An exception is the ‘Walters Tablet’ (ELTS 2), which features only one separate cell at the bottom right corner possibly referring to the temple household of the deity ^dNUN.SAR (= ^dnin-SAR?). But this might also be merely due to the inscriptions’ brevity. Unlike these stone tablets and the archaic texts from Uruk (c. 2800 BC) the famous Uruk Vase, an elaborately carved but uninscribed stone ritual vessel with a rich iconographic repertoire, for example, is certainly to be read from bottom to top, that is to say, starts with the water at the bottom till the food products presented as offerings in the upper register. For similarly arranged artefacts, among them the ‘Royal Standard’ from Ur, see Winter 1991, 63. However, I would contradict her assessment of the Stela of the Vultures, which should be read from top to bottom, not bottom to top, as she asserts. For the converse reading direction with regard to inscribed dedicative artefacts see also the remarks in Balke (2015). Furthermore, the assumed impulse to registers on monuments by the arrangement of writing on (archaic) clay tablets, as it is advanced in Schmandt-Besserat 2004, 36–43, 54ff. seems to be quite unlikely in view of the numerous archaic multi-column tablets with equally horizontal and vertical parting rules (cf. Englund 1998, 56–64).

⁶ For this characteristic sign group see Glassner 1995, 17–20 who convincingly argues that “DUG+SĪLA dirait le statut juridique que ces terres acquièrent dès lors qu’elles sont devenues les biens d’un temple” (Glassner 1995, 18); according to Wilcke 2007, 80 s.v. 8.1.2, this phrase corresponds with later presargonic GEŠTIN.SĪLA (FAOS 5 Ukg. 6 v 2’–3’) and KAŠ.SĪLA (FAOS 5 Ukg. 10 I 6), respectively, as a possible reference to a kind of drinking party or banquet; see also the remarks in Balke (2015).

⁷ See Gelb/Steinkeller/Whiting 1991, 27–29. Yet the conventional classification of the latter group as ‘legal documents’ in opposition to the seemingly administrative texts ELTS 1–7, is far from certain in spite of the obvious structural differences and the associated iconography.

⁸ The fact, that all these ‘ancient kudurrus’ are made of durable (dark) stone instead of inexpensive clay certainly indicates that these inscribed objects were considered quite significant and that they were obviously intended to be permanent and indestructible records. Thus, it is only natural that stone was primarily used as material for the majority of commemorative inscriptions throughout the Early Dynastic periods, e.g. for mace-heads, plaques, slabs, tablets or vessels. Besides, ‘common’ stones (in contrast to ‘semi-precious’ stones) were usually employed for three basic fields of handi-

1. the so-called Blau Monuments (ELTS 10+11), named after the German trader and physician Dr A. Blau, who lived in Samawa, near Uruk: two stone objects of dark-greenish phyllite or schist, including a semi-oval plaque and a tapering pillar, both usually interpreted as a pottery scraper and a chisel respectively,⁹
2. the ‘Figure aux Plumes’ (ELTS 18): a limestone object found in Tell K at Telloh in a secondary layer that might have well contained the remains of a temple of Ningîrsu, and
3. the so-called Ušumgal Stela (ELTS 12) made of light to dark-brown alabaster gypsum.

The provenance of the first and the latter are rather uncertain even though Tell ‘Uqair—due to the mention of the sign-group UR₂.HA.RAD, an archaic writing of the toponym Urum (Tell ‘Uqair)—for the Blau-Monuments¹⁰ and Umma for the Ušumgal Stela in view of the mention of Šara, Umma’s patron deity, conceivably appearing in a personal name, have been occasionally proposed. Nonetheless, the sign in question is neither ŠÁRA (LAGAB×SIG₇ = LAK 782), a sign definitely not attested before the Fāra period,¹¹ nor a typical BĀRA (LAK 153 = UET 2, pl. 8 SL no. 88).¹² Since the question of the signs’ correct identification is of considerable interest, I will briefly discuss it.

First, it must be pointed out, that LAK 782 (LAGAB×SIG₇ = ŠÁra) has—in contrast to BĀRA—no palaeographic precursor in the corpus of the archaic texts from Ur (c. 2800 BC), and is not detectable as the standard writing for the deity ^dŠÁra before the Fāra period. BĀRA on the other hand can be traced back as an onomastic element to the earliest third millennium written documentation, e.g. in the personal names ama-bāra-abzu “Mother-dais-of the Apsu”,¹³ men-bāra-abzu “Diadem-dais-of-the-Apsu”,¹⁴ me?-bāra-abzu “divine essence(?)-(is)-dais-of-the-abzu”¹⁵ and igi-zi-bāra-ge “Trusty-eye-upon²-the-dais”.¹⁶ Considering this evidence with lexical phrases widely known from the Old Sumerian onomasticon, especially in names borne by female individuals, an assumed personal name like Bāra-AN-igi-zi-abzu

work: sculpture, stone-vessel manufacture, and tool/weapon production.

⁹ Cf. Braun-Holzinger 2007, 16–17.

¹⁰ Cf. Reade 2000, 81 for details on the acquisition of the two pieces by the British Museum in 1899.

¹¹ However, see the entry ^dŠÁra en gar in the sale document CUSAS 17 no. 104 (MS 2482) vi 6’ (p. 216), where according to the column’s internal textual structure a divine name should be expected. Nonetheless this sign-form itself, though certainly no BĀRA, has only less in common with those forms attested in the adscriptions of the Ušumgal stela.

¹² In later Old Babylonian Sumerian literary texts both signs could be used to write the theonym ŠÁra, e.g. BĀRA (= ŠÁra₁; mss. A,Z,KK,Y) vs. LAGAB×SIG₇ (= ŠÁra; mss. B, GG) in the composition *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (cf. W. H. Ph. Römer 2004, 14).

¹³ See CUSAS 17, 106 ii 7 and BIN 8, 65 i 2.

¹⁴ See FAOS 5 Urn. 50 c)1.

¹⁵ See FAOS 5/2 AnFara 4 l 3.

¹⁶ See ELTS 22 viii 22’.

instead of ^dŠāra-igi-zi-abzu seems to conform fittingly to the onomastic patterns known from third millennium sources. Moreover, taking into account the range of variants attested for BĀRA (cf. UET 2, pl. 8 SL no. 88), sometimes omitting partially the horizontal and vertical wedges all around the sign frame or showing a nearly blank frame apart from the two crossed wedges, the sign in question might well be identified with BĀRA.

Furthermore, this palaeographic inconsistency, though on a lesser scale, can also be observed within one and the same document, e.g. the instances for BĀRA in ELTS 15 i 25, ii 24 and no. 18 v 1 by omitting the three vertical and horizontal wedges (cf. ELTS 15) or moving the crossed wedges from its central position towards the lower right-hand corner.¹⁷ But it is crucial that the attributed phrase pa₄-ses bára-AN “(Ušumgal), senior priest of Bara’AN” does not produce any plausible meaning. On the other hand, a reading of the two last signs as ^dŠāra would result in a quite reasonable translation, i.e. “senior priest of (the god) Šāra”, even though, as far as I know, this would represent the earliest known attestation of the divine name. But since the arrangement of signs obviously does not follow the ‘correct’ reading and pronunciation of personal names in a consistent manner,¹⁸ e.g. the PN A-kalam-šè written as KALAM[?].ŠÈ.A, the reading and interpretation of the onomastic evidence is still fraught with considerable uncertainty,¹⁹ particularly in view of the stela’s poor state of preservation. All things considered, the issue of the sign’s correct identification cannot be finally clarified here, and the preference for /^dŠāra/ is primarily accounted for by the given context and not on palaeographic grounds.

Coming back to the three stone objects; these artefacts generally have in common (cf. Table 1), that, in addition to the inscribed text, associated iconographic elements and scenes engraved on them appear, apparently mirroring and illustrating the recorded transaction, e.g. the transfer of property. However, the individuals mentioned by name cannot be securely linked with a function as a seller or buyer in each and every case even though the structural parallels to later sale documents strongly lead one to assume a similar internal structure.

Hereunder, I will mainly focus on the ‘Blau Monuments’ and the Ušumgal Stela, and—on a lesser scale—the ‘Figure aux Plumes’.²⁰ In spite of the aforementioned

¹⁷ However, it always remains a problem comparing the obviously more conservative examples of monumental palaeography on stone artefacts with those on clay, which was used for instance for the archaic texts from Ur.

¹⁸ For the aspect of free and random sign order in Old Sumerian personal name see the contribution of C. Lecompte in this volume.

¹⁹ Accordingly, the given sign cluster might well be read (and understood) as *diġir-igi-zi-bāra-abzu “God-trusty-eye-upon’- the-dais-of-the abzu” though, to the best of my knowledge, such an Old Sumerian name pattern is not attested.

²⁰ A detailed treatment of the ‘Figure aux Plumes’ from Ġirsu (Tello) interpreted by Wilcke 1995 as a kind of literary text, i.e. a hymn to the god Ninġirsu, is beyond the scope of this paper, and has thus

Table 1: Scheme of significant features of the artefacts under consideration.

Artefact	Provenance	Material	Personal Names	Context	Shape
‘Blau Monuments’ BM 86260 + 86261 (fig. 1)	Tall ‘Uqair (Urum → ḪA:RAD:ÚR/ or Uruk	dark green- stone facies, slaty schist or phyllite	KA-kiš ₁₇ -gal Ḫašhur-làl	transfer of property	semi-oval plaque (BA→ZATU 40) tapering pillar/ obelisk KU/ DAB ₅ → ZATU 300)
Ušumgal Stela MMA 58.29 (fig. 2)	Umma ² → PN ‘Šára ² /Bára- AN-igizi- abzu;	light/dark- brown Alabas- ter gypsum	Ušumgal; A-kalam ² - šè; Bára-anigi- zi-abzu; Me-é- nunsi; Ak; Urgú- edin-na; Bur-si;	Transfer of real estate (or marital) pro- perty); Donation of an estate; Colophon: En-ḫé-ḡál DÍM ^a	Milestone like, four-sided block of stone, flat front and base, rounded back, hemispherical top
‘Figure aux Plumes’ AO 221	Tellō (Tell K → temple of Ninḡirsu)	Limestone	-----	Hymnal, literary text(?): ^d nin-ḡír-su zà-mì	flattened bas- relief ^b

Notes: a The subscription or colophon written on its base represents one of the quite rare examples of mentioning an inscriptions’ (and object’s) author, i.e. the craftsman (or scribe) who manufactured the artefact, cf. En-ḫé-ḡál DÍM [X]-SAR-RA? “Enḫeḡal, manufacturer of . . .”. Yet, both the sign form of GAN = /ḫé/ (cf. UET 2, pl. 5 SL nos. 47+48) rather looks like an unsubtle variant of GAN in UET 2, 325:1 (sealing), and the assumed RA-sign (cf. UET 2, pl. 22 SL no. 273 = UDU+SI), that resembles an unsubtle LA (cf. UET 2, pl. 22 SL no. 285), have only less in common with the expected archaic ‘standard’ sign form. For another identification of the object’s manufacturer or scribe by signature, respectively, see Steinkeller 2013, 141 (Amar-ŠID, dub-sar) and Loding 1981, 7 with examples for explicitly mentioned lapidaries from the Sargonic and Ur III period. **b** The artefact is often described as a plaque though it lacks the perforated centre of the wall plaques of later Early Dynastic periods.

common features (see Table 1) all three objects reveal themselves to being quite unique. Their main characteristics and a specific structural chart of the involved individuals (and figures) of the Ušumgal Stela are drawn together in Table 1 and Table 2. Another curious script-bearing stone artefact, housed in the F. Bodmer Collection (Cologne) must certainly be classed with this group of Early Dynastic *kudurrus* as well, especially in view of the occurrence of the typical sign complex DUG+SĪLA (col. i 4).²¹ However, in contrast to the roughly tablet-like records ELTS 1–7, the object’s

not been taken into closer consideration due to its obviously different structure. Yet, the ‘Figure aux Plumes’ provides us with the portrayal of the so-called priest-king, a bearded figure with a net skirt, closely resembling in his gesture the main figure on the larger Blau plaque (ELTS 10).

21 As regarding its palaeography, especially the sign forms of DU₆, IB or PA, the object FMB 27 dis-



Fig. 1: Blau Monuments: (left) 'tapering pillar'; (right) 'semi-oval plaque' (c. 2900 BC) © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 2: Ušumgal Stela (c. 2750 BC) © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

plays several common features with the tablet-like objects, i.e. ELTS 1–7, but also with the palaeography of the 'Blau Monuments' such as the IB-sign on the tapering pillar (ELTS 11 l. 4).

inscription runs all around it like a cone or a cylinder seal together with an additional personal name appearing on the surface of the artefact's tapering upper part.²²

By referring to the significant defining properties as *material*, *iconography* and *text* (cf. Table 1),²³ featuring the objects' universal components, I will attempt to improve our understanding of this group of stone artefacts, which are still not fully understood and sometimes only poorly preserved. Besides that I will particularly take into account those sign sequences that can be confidently linked with attested known name patterns from Old Sumerian textual sources, to obtain deeper insight into their general structure while at the same time enabling a more precise internal dating.

Based primarily on onomastic research, for example, one might argue for a slightly later date of both the Ušumgal Stela and the 'Figure aux Plumes' though the latter apparently does not contain any personal name. This notable feature of the latter strongly contrasts with the evidence from the two other stone artefacts. For example, the personal names Hašhur-làl "Apple-syrup" (Rev. ii 15), borne by a male individual, and KA-kiši₁₇-gal "Mouth-is-a-big-Acacia"²⁴ (Obv. ii 6), borne by a female individual, occur in the inscription of the "Blau plaque" (ELTS 10),²⁵ and though these names are not exactly attested in the given form, names with the pattern kiši₁₇-gal "big acacia" and the lexeme làl "honey, syrup" are widely known from the phrasal repertoire of the Old Sumerian onomasticon, but are predominantly linked with different head nouns.²⁶ But in contrast to the Ušumgal Stela, where the depicted figures are directly accompanied by the corresponding adscription (name, title, filiation), both names either directly precede its referential portrayal (cf. KA-kiši₁₇-gal) or occur distantly posterior to the assumed referential figure (cf. Hašhur-làl).²⁷

1 Material and Shape

While the material aspects of Early Dynastic sculpture have occasionally been addressed in scholarship,²⁸ the specific aspect of material and shape of these earliest

²² This peculiar piece is dealt with in detail in Balke (in press).

²³ This tripartite division has been inspired by Gibson's three-part categorization of the inhabited environment: medium : substances : surfaces; cf. Gibson 1979, 16.

²⁴ The name pattern /kiši₁₇-gal/ "big Acacia", alternately read ^(S)UL₄-gal, in all likelihood denotes a thorny plant used as a metaphor for protection.

²⁵ A third personal name which is inscribed on its reverse (line 16) below the section dividing the plaque into two columns and separate entries eludes me and might tentatively be read AN-ĜÍR-il-ZA.

²⁶ Cf. A-kiši₁₇-gal "Father-is-a-big-Acacia" or A-làl "Father-is-like?-honey" both occurring in the corpus of the archaic texts from Ur; see Burrows 1935, 27 s.v. no. 14 ("a-ĝír-gal") and no. 22 ("a-làl").

²⁷ For the archaic form of the sign HAŠHUR see Szarzyńska 1994, 1 s.v. "tag" no. 1 (Uruk IV period).

²⁸ See most recently Evans 2012, 124–130, pointing out that surviving royal sculpture is carved mainly from hard dark stones (e.g. diorite), whereas statues dedicated by private individuals are generally

stone artefacts has not been taken into closer consideration, not to mention its interplay with the associated iconography or the inscribed text.

Admittedly, exact and systematic petrographic assays of the generally employed metamorphic rocks have been conducted only in very few cases, e.g. for the 'Blau Monuments' (cf. Reade 2000), what inevitably resulted in quite vague descriptions in the pertinent works such as "dark stone, blackish stone" etc. without giving any further specification.²⁹ By starting with a seemingly trivial remark on the objects' material and shape, it must be pointed out that though largely unexplored geologically, southern Mesopotamia itself was not entirely devoid of stone, and, for example, gypsum, precisely gypsum alabaster,³⁰ or limestone, both soft, light-coloured stones, were available in Southern Mesopotamia, specifically on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. On the other hand, schist or its variety phyllite, but also greenish serpentine, had to be chiefly exported via trading routes from areas outside central Mesopotamia³¹ such as Egypt, Central Iran or the Persian Gulf.

Therefore it is not surprising that schist (and its varieties), even though relatively soft especially when compared to diorite or olivine gabbro, was only rarely used for manufacturing of stone artefacts in Mesopotamia during the third millennium BC. On the other hand, limestone and gypsum alabaster being used for the 'Figure aux Plumes' and the Ušumgal Stela respectively, have demonstrably been available to the Mesopotamians on the banks of Euphrates and Tigris. However, such an observable orientation to light-coloured stones in contrast to the dark(er) stone varieties used for the earliest group of 'ancient *kudurrus*'³² does not seem to indicate a lower value,

made of soft, light-coloured stones of lower value. Accordingly, one might assume that these artefacts were largely intended to be kept in a temple building and not subjected to the weather.

29 However, improperly identified stone artefacts are by no means restricted to Early Dynastic Mesopotamia, but are known, for example, from Pre-dynastic Egypt as well, e.g. the significant 'Palette of Narmer' (c. 3100 BC), a shield-shaped, ceremonial palette found in the temple of Horus at Hierakonpolis, which is indeed carved from gray-green siltstone but is often described as made of schist or slate.

30 Geologically, this type of alabaster has to be distinguished from the slightly harder calcite alabaster, also known as onyx-marble that was highly esteemed for making jars, vessels, and various sacred objects. In view of the material's characteristic translucency and light colourfulness—the purest alabaster is usually a snow-white material—a translucent green variety, as an ED II plaque from Kiš (cf. Steinkeller 2013, 131) has been described, would represent a quite unique variety of alabaster.

31 However, according to the reported findings both at Mari (c. 17th century BC), where an accessible source along the Euphrates has existed, and at Ur, i.e. in the 'Royal Cemetery' area (c. 2600 BC), the use of schist (or slate) seems to be far more widespread than the number of surviving pieces might indicate (cf. Moorey 1994, 26–27). Furthermore, the use of several exotic stones during the Uruk IV–III period (c. 3400–3000 BC) might be due to extensive trading contacts with the neighbouring city of Susa, a point of access to supplies from the Zagros Mountains and beyond.

32 Dark(er) stone was persistently used for inscribed stone objects throughout the early Dynastic period, e.g. in the (early) Fara period (c. 2500 BC) for the 'Chicago Stone' (ELTS 14) made of black basalt. Moreover, basalt was popular for relief sculpture during the Uruk IV period (c. 3200 BC), e.g. for the well-known 'lion-hunt' stela (cf. Börker-Klähn 1982, nos. 1–3). As its probable source one might

i.e. lesser importance of the latter two artefacts, but quite the contrary. At large the group of stones used for inscribed (monumental) sculpture is nearly identical with those used in vessel manufacture throughout the third millennium BC though not all are equally well suited for the manufacture of vessels, e.g. schist.³³ Yet all used stone varieties are also characterized by the crucial suitability for being burnished for the purpose of increasing its lustre and thus the representative status as an artefact.³⁴

As regards the artefacts' special shape, the prominent shape of both 'Blau Monuments' leaps in the eye while the 'Figure aux Plumes' and the Ušumgal Stela in each case feature shapes, which are relatively known from other script-bearing Early Dynastic stone monuments. The latter, for example, is strongly reminiscent of two slightly later stelae of the ruler Urnanše (c. 2500 BC), the first made of (porous) limestone and found at Tello, bearing a dedicative inscription on its reverse,³⁵ the second granite piece found at Ur, bearing a genealogical adscription on its reverse.³⁶ The particular shape of the 'Blau Monuments' has been interpreted hitherto as representing stone tools, i.e. a pottery scraper (= semi-oval plaque) and a chisel (= tapering pillar).³⁷

Taking up an older proposal of M. Krebern timer³⁸ who connected the archaic sign form of KU/DAB₅ "to seize (the payment)" with the shape of the tapering pillar (ELTS 11), I will argue for a similar palaeographic relationship of the semi-oval plaque (ELTS 10) that might well be interpreted as being formally derived from the archaic sign form BA "distribution".³⁹ In addition, this observation fits well with the fact that BA (cf. fig. 3) appears in the Uruk III administrative corpus—contrasting with GI "delivery outside the household"—, as a general term for distribution (as rations?). Accordingly, BA seems quite suitable to be used as a kind of template for an object recording a list of

assume Syria, which provided the Neo-Assyrian kings with basalt for sculpture during the first millennium BC.

³³ See the commented list of used stones in Moorey 1994, 37–38.

³⁴ Sometimes also volcanic rock such as the hard grey-green trachyte was used for the manufacture of statues, cf. Moorey 1994, 25.

³⁵ This stela seems to commemorate the inauguration of the Ibgal, the temple of the goddess Inana, displaying portrayals of Urnanše, his wife Menbara'abzu and daughter NinUsud, both identified by their names inscribed on their garments.

³⁶ Interesting enough, instead of being cut, the relief is completely made by rubbing-down the stone (cf. Börker-Klähn 1982, no. 16), an obvious indication that the material, i.e. mottled black and white granite, was too hard for the sculptor. Generally, it is equally curious and difficult to understand why such an important ruler as Urnanše has evidently left two stone artefacts of an obviously poor quality; nonetheless this might be due to special circumstances, such as the fact that the latter piece was carried off to Ur and later re-utilized as construction material by the Neo-Babylonian ruler Nebukad-nezzar in the 6th century BC.

³⁷ See Braun-Holzinger 2007, 16–19.

³⁸ Krebern timer 1993–1994, 90 s.v. Nr. 10, 11.

³⁹ For a similar proposal see now Boese 2010, 215. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the sign DU₆ "hill" (cf. UET 2, pl. 18 SL no. 219, e.g. ELTS 1 iii 2) also features a similar shape even though slightly wider, but, of course, does not fit together with KU/DAB₅ as its assumed symbolic counterpart.

goods to be transferred from one individual to another. Both shapes then might confidently be related to the archaic sign forms of KU/DAB, “to seize (the payment)” (cf. fig. 4),⁴⁰ possibly referring to the plot of land representing the receipt of a payment, and

URUK IV
40 BA, IGI

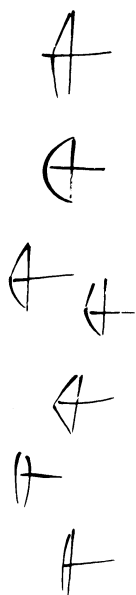


Fig. 3: Archaic Sign-form
BA (ZATU 40; Uruk IV).

BA “distribution”, respectively, obviously referring to the list of commodities, i.e. the price and/or additional payments. If we indeed agree on this interpretation connecting these extraordinary stone artefacts, shapes to archaic sign-forms symbolizing a graphic transfer of a cuneiform sign-form to a script-bearing object, it would fundamentally follow—on the background of Lakoff’s ‘experiential realism’⁴¹—the principle of objectification (“Vergegenständlichung”) of mental images, how it also came into effect in the evolutionary process of the archaic cuneiform script, e.g. by means of metaphor or metonymy.⁴²

As regarding the preference for stone as the employed material, one can only surmise that these documents could have been meant to be deposited in a temple or public office, in a similar fashion to later Presargonic (c. 2350 BC) sale transactions. The latter often required at least two complementary records: a clay tablet kept by the buyer in his archive and a clay cone for the purpose of public scrutiny, but occasionally a further composite record of the buyer’s purchases made of stone.⁴³

Finally, the preceding observations on the diversity and relevance of the employed materials, i.e. stone varieties, lead to the unmistakable résumé that stone, e.g. schist, limestone, alabaster gypsum or basalt, was the preferred material—in con-

⁴⁰ Note the extreme spectrum of diverging sign-forms in the corpus of the archaic texts from Ur (cf. UET 2, pl. 31 SL no. 384) ranging from a (more) narrow frame, a broader, leaning variant till variants with a striking tapering lower part (cf. no. 384 var. d) and further intermediate forms with only vestigial reminiscence of the earlier pictographic form.

⁴¹ Cf. Lakoff 1987.

⁴² Equally it would support the theory particularly advanced by J.-J. Glassner (cf. Glassner 2000), that the archaic script of the Uruk IV/III period was intimately linked to the Sumerian language from the very beginning.

⁴³ For the pre-eminent importance of stone artefacts, erected stones (“Grenzsteine”), in the context of legal procedures, if understood in the broadest sense, see Assmann 1993, 239–241, who explicitly underlined the inherent relevance of the distinguishing marks, visibility (“Sichtbarkeit”), perpetuity (“Ewigkeit”), spatiality (“Räumlichkeit”) and stability (“Ortsfestigkeit”) with regard to (erected) stone objects in the cultures of the Ancient Near East.

trast to the inexpensive clay⁴⁴—for monumental script-bearing artefacts in the first half of the third millennium BC.⁴⁵ Although their predominant use for sale-like transactions can surely be linked to inherent properties such as durability (and absolute hardness),⁴⁶ stability or translucency mirroring the inscriptions' assigned permanence, the selection of a specific stone variety, apart from the assumed pragmatic range of utilization, largely depended on the following basic issues: (A) the intended repository of the artefact, e.g. inside a temple building, (B) the object's specific provenance and the local accessibility to metamorphic rocks, and, presumably, (C) the particular textual characteristic and its perception through the anticipated audience.

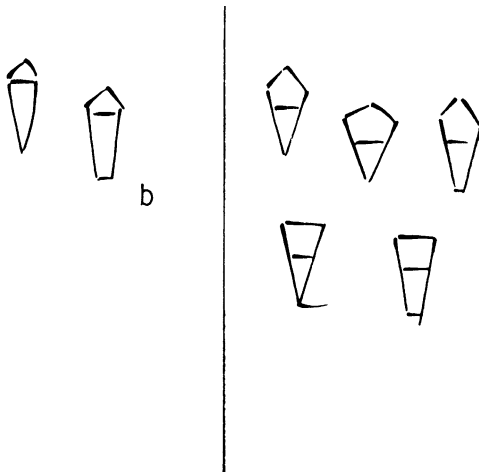


Fig. 4: Archaic Sign-form KU/DAB₅ (ZATU 300; Uruk IV).

⁴⁴ Clay was the standard medium for nearly all administrative record-keeping and communication. Thus clay tablets usually were not meant to bear (commemorative) royal inscriptions, with the exceptional use as copies or drafts of texts originally carved on monumental stone objects.

⁴⁵ Needless to say, that from the time of Urnanše onwards (c. 2500 BC) we also find other materials like copper, gold, lapis lazuli, and silver used for several dedicative script-bearing objects (e.g. foundation figurines, plaques, tablets, or vessels).

⁴⁶ Mineral hardness, characterized by its scratch resistance and measured according to the so-called MOHS scale (1–10), is usually determining for the object's scope for design and the stone's general workability.

2 Iconography

The stylistically and epigraphically unified ‘Blau Monuments’ form one composite artefact probably fashioned at the same time and presumably by the same stonecutter (zadim). In favour of a contemporaneous origin of text and associated iconography is the fact that the two figures facing each other on the obverse of the semi-oval plaque, a man who holds a kind of pestle⁴⁷ and a woman (?) with bent arms and quenched fists,⁴⁸ are apparently accurately arranged according to the dividing rules of the entries, deliberately considering the necessary space for both portrayals to attain a compositionally balanced result. In this regard, the Blau Monuments show a more discernible consideration for the associated iconography than, for example, the Ušumgal Stela or ‘Figure aux Plumes’.

Only the semi-oval plaque (ELTS 10) completely contains iconography and text on its obverse and reverse, whereas the tapering pillar (‘obelisk’) bears writing on its obverse but iconographic scenes on its reverse.⁴⁹ On iconographic grounds, the semi-oval plaque shares with the ‘Figure aux Plumes’ the depiction of a bearded man wearing a headband and a skirt of netlike material (indicated by the incised crisscross pattern), generally referred to as the ‘priest-king’ (EN) on account of his appearance in both secular and religious contexts. Although the bearded male figure (‘priest-king’) of the ‘Figure aux Plumes’ standing before three colossal maces, i.e. a temple door, apparently displays minor pictorial differences, e.g. the longer backswept hair and the two feathers,⁵⁰ both stone artefacts obviously seize the well-known pictorial motif of the so-called priest-king, i.e. male EN(-priest) of Inana,⁵¹ originally connected with (slightly) earlier iconographic traditions from the Uruk III period.⁵² Generally, considering the minor variations of the figure’s imagery, e.g. typical net skirt vs. plain skirt⁵³ or the differences in hairstyle, it seems evident that the specific iconography of the ‘priest-king’ should be seen more in terms of the essential imagery of a certain ruler type and less in terms of the specific attire. In addition, the rounded headwear

⁴⁷ This object has been erroneously assigned to the female co-seller(?) in Asher-Greve 2006, 46–47.

⁴⁸ The identification of this figure has been discussed controversially, see, for example, Braun-Holzinger 2007, 17–18 who argues for an identification as a male (figure) against Steinkeller in ELTS p. 41.

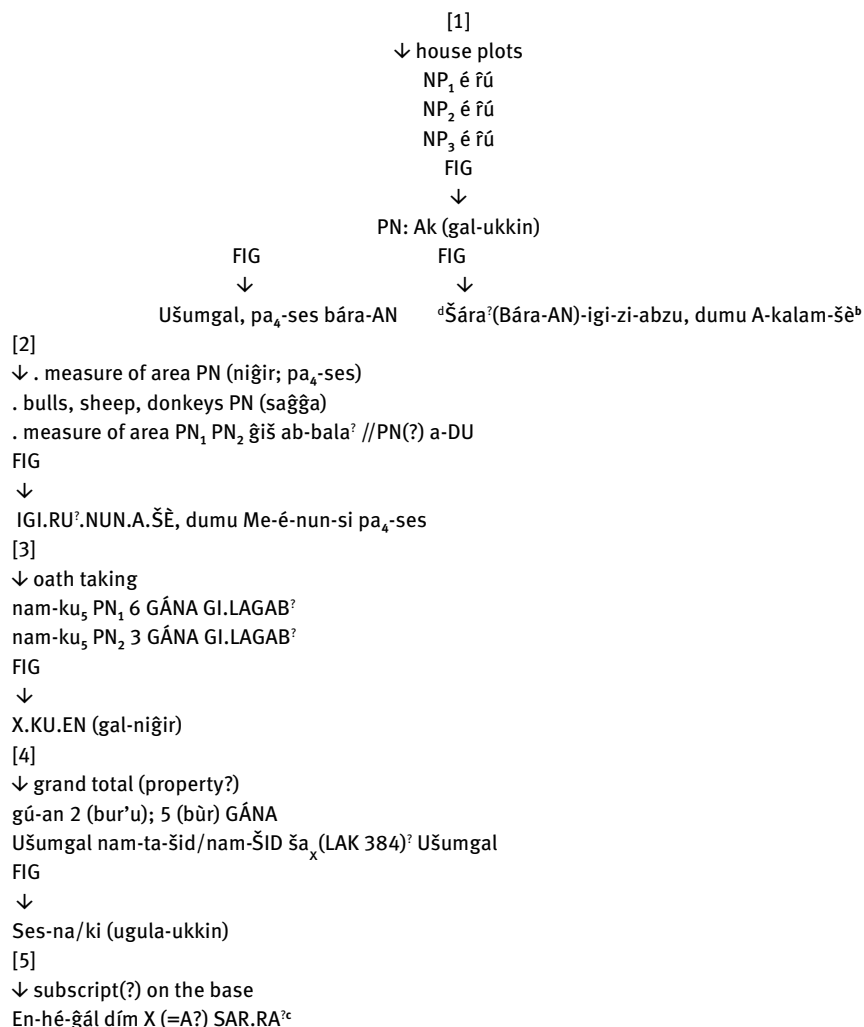
⁴⁹ For further details see Gelb et al. 1991, 40–42 and Boese 2010, 214–218.

⁵⁰ For a different interpretation of these “feathers” as wheat stalks (or another symbol of vegetation) see Dolce 1997, 1–3.

⁵¹ For a recent critical appraisal of the persistent interpretation of the EN from the Uruk IV–III text corpus as “priest-king” see Suter 2014, 554–560.

⁵² For further instances of this specific figure see Boese 2010, 216–218 with older literature.

⁵³ Cf. cylinder seals in Boese 2010, 219 Abb. A–H.

Table 2: Scheme of Iconography and Text (FIG = depiction; PN = personal name).^a

Notes: **a** For a similar chart see Milano 2008, 102. **b** Against Gelb/Steinkeller/Whiting 1991, 46 the father of the woman named “Šára/Bára-AN-igi-zi-abzu is not Ušumgal but, according to the given signs, A-kalam (UET 2 pl. 29 SL no. 367)-šè “Father-for-the-land (Sumer)”, cf. the similar Old Sumerian male and female personal names Lugal-a-kalam “The king-is-the-father-of-the-land”, A-kalam-du₁₀ “Father-is-good-[for]-the-land (Sumer)” or shortened A-kalam “Father-[for?]-the-land (Sumer)”, the name of the wife of the Ensi Abzukidug. **c** If sar ‘to write’ is really meant, it would be the earliest attestation of this verbal base otherwise appearing more frequent in the (later) textual corpus from Abu Salabikh (c. 2600 BC); for an elaborate discussion of sar ‘to write’, in opposition to hur ‘to draw’, see most recently Glassner 2000, 106 although one might not follow his given etymology ‘go fast and straight’.

(or circlet) turns out then to be significantly more essential as a possible indicator for rulership than the other attributes.⁵⁴

By looking closely at the depicted iconographic scenes, it can be also perceived that all three stone artefacts apparently contain pictorial indications for accompanying symbolic legal acts widely known from the contemporaneous textual evidence. These associated ritual actions symbolized the transfer and conveyance of (real) property in sale documents throughout the third millennium BC and at the same time made public the whole transaction, for example, by means of a *niĝir* “herald, town crier”.⁵⁵

At least two virtually certain indications for such additional symbolic ceremonies can be gleaned from the depicted pictorial scenes: (A) the *ĝi š . . . ba la* “crossing over/ passing the pestle/wooden stick” ritual action, assuming that the bearded male figure (‘priest-king’) is holding a pestle (or wooden stick) with both hands⁵⁶ on the obverse of the semi-oval plaque (ELTS 10), and (B) the *gag é-gar₈(-ra) . . . dū* “driving the peg into the wall (horizontally)” ceremonial act as a nail (*gag*) is clearly discernible in the left side of a temple’s(?) doorway protruding horizontally from the wall of an architectural structure in front of Ušumgal’s portrayal (cf. ELTS 12: Photograph Side A).⁵⁷ If the visible nail-like object is correctly identified with a peg (*gag*), this would represent crucial evidence for the fact that these objects were indeed displayed in a public place. On the other hand, an interpretation of the first mace being grasped by the bearded male figure (‘priest-king’) with his left hand on the ‘Figure aux Plumes’, as symbolizing a kind of pestle or wooden stick, too, seems less likely, especially with regard to a possible identification of this figure as a deity (*Ninĝirsu*).

⁵⁴ This is supported by the observation that the bald figure depicted on the plaque’s reverse wears no headwear but a long net-skirt who might represent another involved official or an acolyte of the bearded ‘priest-king’.

⁵⁵ Its omission would have vitiated the validity of the recorded proceedings. Generally, it seems to turn out that the further one tries to trace back the evolvement of legal matters to their very beginnings the more an association to symbolic and ritual actions seems to manifest itself. For the role of the *niĝir* ‘herald’ see Steinkeller 1989, 101–102.

⁵⁶ This object is crucially different from both the tools(?) being gripped by the three kneeling servants(?) or the sitting craftsman(?) on the tapering pillar (‘obelisk’). These objects, if indeed representing chisels or mortars, might well be taken as pointing to the general importance of craftsmanship, either generally in the society or, concretely, for manufacturing these two small stone artefacts; see Moorey 1994, 56–57 for similar attempts at an explanation.

⁵⁷ It is interesting to observe that as in the case of the ‘Blau Monuments’, namely the semi-oval plaque, in the case at issue the depicted figure of Ušumgal also faces a female figure of the same size, holding a kind of vessel and wearing a garment draped over her left shoulder, across the doorway of a temple(?), even though, as will be pointed out, this woman cannot be identified as Ušumgal’s daughter but—according to the adscription—as the daughter of a certain Akalamše.

3 Text

Enlarging now upon the crucial issue of the respective textual evidence revealing itself more or less in the artefacts' inscriptions, it becomes immediately evident that all three texts clearly differ from one another both in their content, though on a lesser scale, and complexity despite the aforementioned palaeographic and/or structural similarities. As regards the textual evidence, i.e. the content, I will generally confine myself to conspicuous structural remarks on selected issues, which occasionally might deviate from the interpretation (and transliteration) presented by the authors of ELTS. Considering the 'Blau Monuments', both stone pieces feature diverging portions of inscribed text: the tapering pillar ('obelisk') a five-line inscription on its obverse running subsequently from top to the bottom, the semi-oval plaque a two-column inscription—interrupted by two human portrayals—on its obverse ending at the top of the reverse with an additional adscription on the upper left side, above the naked, beardless figure with the stick-like tool (driller?) sitting on a kind of taboret and the bald figure who wears a net skirt. A noteworthy property of the plaque's inscription is the use of dividing vertical lines within a case, that is to say sub-columns (cf. col. l. 4a–c: 2 *uri* '2 U.-vessels'; 2 *ga da* '2 linen (cloths)'; 2 *ša ki r* (LAK 602) *LÁ ŠĒ*⁵⁸ '2 butter churns'), as it is a known characteristic of multi-column archaic tablets from the proto-literate period (Uruk III).⁵⁹

The relatively brief inscription of the tapering pillar ('obelisk') in all likelihood records the size of the sold(?) real estate (c. 33 ha) together with its concrete site, i.e. the meadow⁶⁰ of the (deity) *Nin-UL₄(?)* (l. 1), that it was returned (*gi₄-a*; l. 2) to the exterior(?) of Urum (*ĤA.ŪR.BAR*²; l. 2–3), by the buyer *BIL_x* (SL no. 377 NE.PAP)-*alam-UL₄-GI₄*[?],⁶¹ the cultivator of the temple household (*engar èš*; l. 4–5). The semi-oval plaque lists the commodities presumably representing the (additional) payment, among them birds, i.e. black francolins(*DAR*),⁶² a cauldron—belonging to the woman

⁵⁸ Probably a type of vessel, if comparable to (later) *duš a ki r-šè-lá*.

⁵⁹ Cf. Englund 1998, 56–60 and n. 5; this specific indication seldom occurs in later documents as well, for example, in ELTS 13, a rectangular limestone tablet probably dated to the Fara period (c. 2500 BC).

⁶⁰ For *U₈.SAL* 'meadow(?)' (< *ú-sal*) see also the toponym *SAL.U₈*^{ki} attested in CUSAS 17 (2011) no. 104 (MS 2482) v' 4 and vi'5.

⁶¹ See Krebernik 2002, 14 fn. 39 for convincingly taking the sign sequence /SL no. 37 PAP.NE/ as the graphic precursor of later *ĜIŠ.NE/GIBIL* (= /*bil*/). However, the sign read as *GI₄* by Krebernik, especially, if compared to a clear *GI₄* in l. 2, is rather *TAK₄* (SL no. 118), what might lead to an equally sound transliteration as *TAK₄.ALAM gibil(NE) Pa₄-UL₄-ĜIŠ* 'new portrayal(!) of P.

⁶² In his critical appraisal, Sommerfeld 2006, 56 has convincingly argued against an interpretation of *BA.DAR* 'dagger' as a Semitic loanword (< *patarru*) in Sumerian as postulated in Gelb/Steinkeller/Whiting 1991, 41–43.

K.—, and vessels, linen (clothes), a slave(?), silver, beer and a kid, belonging to the man H.⁶³

But not all entries among the enumerated goods can be explained conclusively, e.g. EN.A and EN.ŠĀ. Both sign groups are only rarely attested in the archaic text corpus, e.g. EN.A in CUSAS 1: 135 (list of cereal products) or EN.ŠĀ in *ibid.* 182:6 (ration list), where an interpretation as ‘something for the EN’, as it is likely in the phrase EN.TÚG ‘garments (for) the EN’, seems hardly plausible, particularly in view of a sequence GĀNA EN.ŠĀ (CUSAS 1, 25:1), where EN.ŠĀ appears to be a personal name or perhaps a toponym. On the other hand, the occurrence of initial numbers seems to exclude an interpretation as a name of an individual. Furthermore, by reading the two signs as EN.ZA ‘(precious) stones for the EN(?)’—the signs A and ZA are not yet strictly separated—it would become even more plausible to identify the first portrayal as a female person and likewise to link the whole content with the transfer of marital property, as it was suggested by Wilcke.⁶⁴ Eventually, it is notable that based on palaeographic and contextual grounds and in view of the compositionally balanced and accurate iconography, there seems no plausible reason to contest the primary character of both writing and associated iconography of this unique pair of stone artefacts.

In contrast to the textual evidence of the ‘Blau Monuments’, the inscription of the Ušumgal stela (cf. Table 2) is far more complex, e.g. the number of mentioned house plots and involved high officials, e.g. senior priests (pa₄-ses),⁶⁵ or the final peculiar mention of the grand total (gú-an), and displays conspicuously phraseological traits of a principally legal record, e.g. the taking of the declaratory oath (nam-ku₅) or the mention of the symbolic passing by a wooden pestle (ġiš ab-bala).⁶⁶ Moreover, the inscription contains (short) finite verbal forms such as ab-bala, an obvious abbreviation of later ġiš-a ab-ta-bala “let someone/something pass the wooden pestle”, a feature that it shares with the text of the ‘Figure aux Plumes’, e.g. ġiš nu-rú “wood is not erected”, but which is not found in the text of the ‘Blau Monuments’ though

⁶³ Interestingly enough, many of these entries could be well interpreted as personal names, even though as truncated variants, e.g. iġi-gùn (cf. ELTS 15 ii 11, vi 10, viii 22), en-a(-rá-nú), en-šà(-kúš/ga-na) or ki-kù, which all are attested in the Old Sumerian onomasticon. Notwithstanding, if compared to the sign repertoire of the archaic texts from Ur, the given sign form must be certainly read BA (see UET 2, pl. 18 SL no. 222) instead of IGI (cf. UET 2, pl. 20 SL nos. 240 and 185 [on a sealing]), because both forms are clearly separated from each other and thus represent distinct signs (and lexemes) in this corpus. The IGI-sign (SL no. 240) obviously preserved the similarity to its pictorial origin, i.e. the eye, whereas BA developed into a more trapezoidal frame.

⁶⁴ See Wilcke 2007, 64.

⁶⁵ For this title, literally the ‘older relative of the brother(hood)’ see the detailed treatment in Krispijn 2004.

⁶⁶ That the sign sequence NAM ŠID TA (or LAK 384) should be read /nam-ta-šid/ representing a finite verbal form seems quite unlikely due to the lack of any other known verbal parallel, whereas a genitive phrase like nam-šid za_x (LAK 384) “counted total property of (Ušumgal)” fits in the context more appropriate.

symbolized by its depicted iconography. Generally, the occurrence of finite Sumerian verbal forms usually consisting of a verbal stem with a preceding (dimensional) prefix, sometimes including a dimensional personal prefix, is not attested before the Fara period, for example, in the ‘Baltimore Stone’ (ELTS no. 15) displaying forms like *íb-è* “it was removed”, *ab-a₅* “it was applied (on)” or *an-na-lá* “it was weighed out for him”. This appearance of finite verbal forms is surely indicative for a later dating of both the Ušumgal Stela and the ‘Figure aux Plumes’ in contrast to the older ‘Blau Monuments’.⁶⁷

4 Conclusion

Based on the observations and insights achieved through the structural comparison of these significant stone monuments, first and foremost, it is evident that iconography and writing, i.e. the graphic representation of language, seem to be quite disjunctive categories already in the earliest written documentation; in other words, iconography and writing are clearly separated ‘communicative’ media.⁶⁸ While iconography and textual evidence of the ‘Blau Monuments’ roughly function as complementary referential components, that is to say they essentially display the purpose of the whole transaction, in the case of the Ušumgal Stela both seem to represent inconsistently marked categories. This becomes evident by considering the pictorial hint at the peg (gag), i.e. the ceremonial act of driving a nail into a wall, in opposition to the divergent textual indication of the symbolic act of making someone pass by a wooden pestle. Therefore, this relation seems to be entirely different from the case in ancient Egypt⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Generally the corpus of the archaic texts from Ur contains the first examples of infinite verbal forms (cf. verbal base + /a/) and the usage of phonetic complements, e.g. *gíd-a* “surveyed” in UET 2, 104 iv 5 (*gíd^a*).

⁶⁸ However, there are rare examples of co-occurring (glyptic) imagery and cuneiform writing on seals, e.g. an unique seal formerly belonging to the Erlenmeyer collection (cf. Nissen/Damerow/Englund 1990, 45 Abb. 5a1), which probably displays the designation of a certain festival, i.e. ‘festival of the evening/ morning Inana (= Venus)’, underlined by the appearance of the archaic sign-forms AN (‘god’ = ZATU 31), UD (‘day, sun’ = ZATU 566), SIG (‘below, evening’ = ZATU 451), and EZEM (‘festival’ = ZATU 150) together with the reed bundle as the symbol of the goddess Inana. In addition, the only further evidence in the Uruk III period for cuneiform writing on seals comes from a sealing found on several archaic tablets from Jemdet Nasr containing the names of some Mesopotamian cities though in contrast to the written forms the glyptic forms are more pictorial and curvaceous.

⁶⁹ This becomes particularly evident in a specific emblematic mode of representation, where hieroglyphs and further elements acquired human limbs in order to act independently in iconographic scenes; cf. Baines 1985, 43–63.

or Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica,⁷⁰ where imagery and glyphs continuously remained intimately close and even integrally connected.⁷¹

There are indeed further meaningful examples for such an incoherency and inconsistency, between writing and associated iconography. For example, in Eanatum's famous Stela of the Vultures, a stela fragment of Sargon of Akkade (c. 2300 BC)⁷² or the Dadusha Stela (18th century BC),⁷³ the depicted vultures, though definitely part of the artefact's imagery—in the latter both cases certainly a pictorial reminiscence of the Stela of Vultures—are strikingly not explicitly mentioned in the corresponding inscription. However, as has been widely stressed by Winter (1985), the relationship between imagery and writing might well be seen as one of originally independent and concomitant modes that were only linked in their incorporation on the single artefact.

Leaving aside the intricate matter of exactly determining the precise kind of legal procedure (e.g. marriage, inheritance, grant) described in text and iconography, the observable interplay between writing, iconography and chosen material might well permit deeper insights into the object's internal structure and, possibly, its intended perception in the public. Considering the fact, that the authorship of third millennium Sumerian records is, apart from a few exceptions, usually unknown, the explicit mention of the author, the 'scribe' or 'artisan', who chiselled the text of the Ušumgal Stela, deserves special attention. Apparently, this must be understood to mean that this individual, i.e. Enĝeĝal, was officially responsible for the inscription's correctness.

First of all, three fairly assured statements about this group of stone artefacts can be made:

1. all three served a legal-documentary purpose in the wider sense using a durable material as a means of ensuring their endurance;
2. the contemporaneous origin of iconography and cuneiform writing is virtually certain for all artefacts;⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Cf. the contributions in Boone/Mignolo 1994.

⁷¹ However, imagery and cuneiform writing occasionally coalesced, as can be seen on the metal vessels (bowls, tumblers) from Ur, which display on its rim a band of 'herring-bone design' together with a twofold zig-zag beneath (cf. Selz 2004, 200). These decorative elements, i.e. the zig-zag and the herring-bone, are actually pictorial repetitions of the cuneiforms signs for "water" (a) and barley (še). Note, that the same vessels often feature rosettes on their bases, usually interpreted as an emblem of the goddess Inana (differently cf. Selz 2004, 201), and flowers as figurative elements.

⁷² Cf. Braun-Holzinger 2007, 88–91 and 101 s.v. AKK 1.

⁷³ Cf. Braun-Holzinger 2007, 152–154 and 168 s.v. AB 12.

⁷⁴ Needless to say, that there is, of course, Early Dynastic sculpture with secondary writing what becomes evident on palaeographic grounds or through the script's absolute crudeness; see Boese 1996, 27–35 for examples from Mari (c. 2500 BC).

3. the lack of the sign group DUG(KAŠ/TIN)+SĪLA in all three texts must be taken as indicative for a different (legal?) categorization compared to the group of tablet-like stone objects ELTS 1–7.

But what do these very specific stone artefacts reveal with regard to their particular ‘social environment’, that is to say, concerning their respective addressee, concrete location and repository or even ‘owner’. Apart from the ‘Figure aux Plumes’, which precise location at the temple of Ningirsu seems barely questionable, we can only make conjectures for the other two objects with regard to the aspects mentioned. While in the case of the Ušumgal Stela the iconographic composition and the use of a stela as the script-bearing medium speak in favour of a cultic donation within a family and thus rather for a public location, e.g. a courtyard, gate or processional way of a sanctuary,⁷⁵ the two-part composite nature of the ‘Blau Monuments’ does not easily reveal further details through its writing and iconography about its actual ‘social environment’, the location and the assumed audience.

Notwithstanding, considering both the fundamental importance of ritual in early Ancient Near Eastern law and the corresponding lack of any textual reference to symbolic ceremonies, it seems worth considering that both stone pieces might well embody this symbolic sphere in themselves by having possibly been deposited with the buyer, i.e. the cultivator of the sanctuary (*eng ar èš*), and/or the former owners of the real estate. It seems also conceivable that by imitating the forms of semantically referential archaic cuneiform signs, i.e. BA (‘semi-oval plaque’) and KU/DAB₅ (‘tapering pillar’), the ‘Blau Monuments’ might well be directed at an illiterate public viewer or audience, who is supposed to discern the objects’ inherent legal nature already by their alluding shape. Yet their actual location and concrete architectural placement still remain quite opaque. Moreover, if these pieces have been meant for public scrutiny at all, is far from certain even though both artefacts, if placed upright — orientated to the direction of reading — almost at the same height (c. 16 cm), might well represent a deliberately arranged composite ensemble considerably enhancing the owner’s prestige. But likewise, they could represent a kind of valid deed usually kept privately by the buyer and only to be produced as a proof of the transaction’s general legitimacy.⁷⁶ From an evolutionary point of view the unique ‘Blau Monuments’ seem

⁷⁵ It goes without saying that not all stelae (*na-rú-a*, lit. “erected stone”) are *per se* cultic or historical records, as can be seen, for example, in an Old Sumerian administrative text from Lagas (c. 2350 BC) recording the acreage of various vegetables and its specific dimensions, and also mentioning that one furrow of onions borders on a stela (*na-rú-a*). Thus, *na-rú-a*, in this context is certainly to be understood as a boulder and not as a monumental stela in the narrow sense.

⁷⁶ We also can only surmise whether the ‘Blau Monuments’, if kept privately or deposited in the public, were ever read aloud to a possibly illiterate seller or buyer by a scribe or literate craftsman. Likewise the probable degrees of literacy and the scale of passive or active knowledge of writing and reading cannot be conclusively justified in the earliest literate periods of Mesopotamia.

to be at the earliest stage of inscribed monumental art, possibly not yet adequately aligned to its intended purpose, before the evolution of the classic slab-like stela with fixed divisions into friezes in the later Early Dynastic periods. Likewise their uniqueness is certainly due to this stage of development and especially to possible different local traditions.⁷⁷

On the other hand, one can reasonably infer that inscribed artefacts with a definite stand space as stelae could be visibly deposited on walls or in wall niches, while plaques or wall plaques could be affixed to walls or doors by means of a large nail or peg and build into a wall with its back side respectively.⁷⁸ Thus, if one considers the criterion of accessibility and visibility of writing as vital for any literate communication, consequently the complete textual evidence, if on obverse, reverse or any other side of the object, should be clearly recognizable to any assumed audience. Although this group of artefacts, especially the enigmatic 'Blau Monuments' in its unique two-part composite structure, does not convey much factual unambiguous evidence, they definitely embody as artefacts with a primary legal-documentary purpose important mosaic pieces in the evolutionary process of early writing, equally substantiating the fundamental significance of law as a socially important area in the extension of literacy in Ancient Mesopotamia after the Late-Uruk period.

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⁷⁷ By contrast, the stela of Ušumgal (c. 2750 BC) represents the earliest exponent of a milestone-like kind of stela that was, for example, used by Umanše two centuries later, too.

⁷⁸ See Börker-Klähn 1982, 115 and n. 4.

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Gianni Marchesi

Object, Images, and Text: Remarks on Two “Intercultural Style” Vessels from Nippur

A special class of carved vessels, which are characterized by distinctive low-relief decoration of the entire surface with motifs of various kind (abstract, architectural, vegetal) or with naturalistic scenes involving wild animals and human or hybrid—part human, part animal—figures,¹ is attested in a vast area of the ancient Near and Middle East that stretches from Mesopotamia and the region of the Gulf to India and Uzbekistan. These artifacts, mostly made of chlorite or steatite, are generally referred to either as “intercultural style” vessels, because of their wide distribution,² or as *série ancienne*, in opposition to another, later group of carved chlorite vessels called *série récente*.³

The publication of an astonishing corpus of such vessels and other objects of the same style from the area of Jiroft, in southeastern Iran,⁴ has raised great interest and generated considerable debate among scholars in the last ten years. Some now prefer to label them as “Jiroft style” rather than “intercultural style”.⁵ In this study the latter, traditional designation is retained for the sake of convenience. We know that “intercultural style” artifacts were primarily made in southeastern Iran, in what was then called the land of Marḥaši in Sumerian and Baraḥšum (or Paraḥšum) in Akkadian,⁶

I would like to thank Lawrence M. Berman, Senior Curator of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for the permission to publish the images of MFA 1980.71 that are reproduced here; Sylvia Winkelmann for allowing me to use her drawing of IM 66071; and Glenn Magid, who as usual has carefully revised my English.

1 See Kohl 1975, 138–228; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1988; Perrot/Madjidzadeh 2005; iid. 2006; Perrot 2008.

2 We owe the designation “intercultural style” for this class of objects to Philip Kohl: “Over the past forty years a corpus of elaborately carved soft stone artefacts has gradually been recognized as a unique body of material for documenting long-distance trade throughout Southwest Asia. No other class of artefacts are as widely distributed in the mid-third millennium. This corpus will be referred to as the Intercultural Style, a term which emphasizes its distribution and apparent significance for the numerous cultures of highland Iran, the Persian Gulf, and the lowland urban centers of Mesopotamia and Khuzestan” (Kohl 1975, 1). According to Lamberg-Karlovsky (1993, 285), however, “this object type represented a shared ideological and ritual significance to peoples of different cultures [...] united by the specific belief system that the vessels symbolize. [...] This alone justifies the use of the term ‘intercultural style’”. Other scholars consider this style to be the product of the phenomenon of cultural interpenetration, and the designation “intercultural” as an apt label for a style that seems to blend elements of diverse cultural origin (see, e.g., J. Aruz in Aruz/Wallenfels 2003, 325).

3 See de Miroschedji 1973. Cf. also Moorey 1999, 46–49.

4 Madjidzadeh 2003.

5 See, e.g., Perrot/Madjidzadeh 2005.

6 See Steinkeller 1982; Amiet 1986, 132–139; Potts 2004, 6–9; id. 2005, 67f.; Steinkeller 2012; id. 2014.

although there may also be some evidence for the manufacture and/or reworking of objects of this sort in the island of Tarut,⁷ in the Gulf region.⁸ Their chronology extends for a period of roughly six to seven centuries, that is, from the Early Dynastic II period to Akkadian or Ur III times, in terms of Mesopotamian chronology.⁹

According to Philip Kohl, who first studied these objects systematically, the “intercultural style” vessels attest to long-distance trade in finished commodities.¹⁰ In Kohl’s view, these vessels were manufactured in several production centers in south-eastern Iran in order to satisfy and exploit the Mesopotamian demand for elite goods. This interpretation was challenged by Carl Lamberg-Karlovsky, who considered the “intercultural style” vessels to be “artifacts of ritual significance”.¹¹ Lamberg-Karlovsky remarked that some of the iconographic elements, such as the hut-pot and the snake, “appear to symbolize death”, while the provenance of numerous examples of these kinds of vessels from tombs “further suggest[s] their association with the ritual of death and burial”.¹² The wide distribution of these objects was interpreted by Lamberg-Karlovsky as the reflex of a shared ideology of death, and of common burial rites, by people of different cultures.¹³ On the other hand, Pascal Butterlin most recently pointed out that “alors que ces vases ont été découverts en milieu funéraire dans le sud de l’Iran, notamment aux alentours de Jiroft ou sur l’île de Tarut, ils apparaissent en Mésopotamie dans le mobilier des grandes sanctuaires”,¹⁴ while Holly Pittman maintained that “these highly symbolic objects were made solely for local consumption” and that “this artifact was culturally salient only in the Halil River valley”.¹⁵ In addition, Pittman observed that “only closed vessels are documented among exported examples [...] which may suggest that they were exported for their contents”.¹⁶

Some vessels of the “intercultural style” that were found in Mesopotamian sites bear cuneiform inscriptions in the Sumerian or Akkadian language. These inscribed pieces are few in number; no more than nine or ten examples are presently known.¹⁷ Of course, these kinds of vessels do not readily accommodate inscriptions, as their outer surfaces are customarily covered with decorations, leaving no space for inscriptions. When inscriptions do appear, they are usually engraved on the inside of

7 See Zarins 1987 (especially p. 67). Cf. Kohl 2001, 220f.; Cleuziou 2003.

8 Cf. Marchesi 2011, 195 with n. 34.

9 See Potts 1994, 255–262; Moorey 1999, 48–49; Kohl 2001, 221–228.

10 Kohl 1975; 1978; 1979; 2001.

11 Lamberg-Karlovsky 1988, 53.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid. See also Lamberg-Karlovsky 1993, 285–287.

14 Butterlin 2014, 183.

15 Pittman 2013, 309.

16 Ibid.

17 See Marchesi forthcoming.

vessels, where they cannot be seen except by peering inside. In two noteworthy cases, however, inscriptions do appear on the outer surface of the vessels.

One of these two objects, which is now housed in the Iraq Museum at Baghdad (IM 66071),¹⁸ comes from a well-defined archaeological context: level VIIB of the Innanak (= “Inanna”) Temple at Nippur,¹⁹ which dates to the Early Dynastic IIIa period.²⁰ The decoration on this vessel depicts a contest scene involving a spotted feline—either a leopard or a cheetah²¹—and a coiled snake, one of the favorite motifs of the “intercultural style.”²² A two-line inscription is engraved in the empty triangular space between the tail of the feline and the coils of the snake (fig. 1).²³



Fig. 1: IM 66071 (adapted from a drawing by Sylvia Winkelmann).

¹⁸ *La terra tra i due fiumi* 1985, 306, no. 55.

¹⁹ Hansen 1975, 184 *ad* 76a. For the reading of the goddess' name as Innanak, instead of conventional Inanna, see Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 239 with n. 18.

²⁰ See Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 34–36.

²¹ Cf. Potts 2002, 347–352; Perrot/Madjidzadeh 2005, 137 with n. 12.

²² See Perrot/Madjidzadeh 2005, 139, fig. 8.

²³ For photographs, see Kohl 1975, 156, pl. XXXIXb; id. 1979, 64, fig. 5; id. 2001, 226, fig. 9.13. See also Goetze 1970–1971, 50, 7N–120 (copy of the inscription).

Donald Hansen and George Dales, who first published the piece in 1962, read this inscription as “Inanna and the serpent”, which they interpreted as a sort of explanatory gloss on the image, according to which the feline represents the goddess Innanak in the form of an animal.²⁴ Hansen later argued for the same interpretation, this time more cautiously:

Zwei Keilschriftzeichen [sic!], eingeritzt auf der Rückseite, zwischen den Schwänzen der Tiere, könnten als “Inanna und die Schlange” gelesen werden und damit die Kampfszene erklären.²⁵

The idea that the inscription directly relates to the imagery on the vessel found much favor among scholars. Hansen’s interpretation has been reiterated again and again in the secondary literature,²⁶ most recently by Sylvia Winkelmann, who, while commenting on certain alleged theriomorphic representations of an Iranian goddess in the Iranian art of the third millennium BC, writes:

Und eines dieser iranischen “intercultural style”-Gefäße mit der Darstellung des Kampfes zwischen Leopard und Schlange [...] nennt uns den Namen, mit dem die Sumerer diese Iranische Göttin vergleichen: es ist beschriftet mit: “Inanna und die Schlange”.²⁷

A slightly different interpretation was offered by Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, who argues that this inscription is not a caption but rather a dedication: “To Inanna and the Serpent”.²⁸ Draffkorn Kilmer apparently supposes that a sort of mythological serpent or a snake god (“the Serpent”) was worshipped together with the goddess. No such serpent or deity ever existed, however. Nor can either of these translations be upheld. The correct interpretation of this inscription was already provided by Albrecht Goetze, in his comprehensive study of the Early Dynastic inscriptions from Nippur in 1970–71.²⁹ Goetze correctly observed that what Hansen and Dales interpreted as MUŠ, i.e., as the Sumerian logogram for “snake”, is not MUŠ at all,³⁰ but rather two signs: PAP and NUN. Goetze read PAP.NUN as “Pa₄.n un” and interpreted the inscription as a dedication to the goddess Innanak by someone of this name, though noting that he was aware of no other attestation of such a personal name.

²⁴ Hansen/Dale 1962, 79.

²⁵ Hansen 1975, 185 *ad* 76a.

²⁶ See Brown 1973, 44; Kohl 1978, 469; Williams-Forte 1980–1983, 603; E. Valtz in *La terra tra i due fiumi* 1985, 364; Roaf 1990, 81; Collins 1994, 114; Lewis 1996, 45; Kohl 2001, 226, caption to fig. 9.13; Pittman 2002, 211; etc.

²⁷ Winkelmann 2003, 613.

²⁸ Draffkorn Kilmer 2000, 53f.

²⁹ Goetze 1970–1971, 42, 7N–120.

³⁰ For the form of the sign MUŠ in this period, see LAK 235.

The question was then reopened by Horst Steible: according to him, “pa₄-nun” might represent a personal name, a place name, or an epithet of Innanak.³¹

While no such toponym is known, the hypothesis that PAP.NUN represents a divine epithet may find some support in the occurrence of this sign sequence in the divine name spellings ⁴PAP-nun-na³² and ⁴pa₄/pa₅-nun-(na-)an/na-ki.³³ However, these theonyms are only attested much later (Old Babylonian period and later). The entry UD.PAP.NUN in a Fara-period word-list written in the orthographic style called UD.GAL.NUN³⁴ is probably not relevant either: UD.PAP.NUN is almost certainly to be interpreted as pab-kur(UD)-gal(NUN), i.e., as an UD.GAL.NUN writing of the personal name Pab-kurgal,³⁵ “The Leader Is a Great Mountain”.³⁶ Finally, there remains to be considered a number of attestations of PAP.NUN in the archaic texts from the Uruk III (or Jemdet Nasr) period. Here PAP and NUN seem to occur in the writings of personal names; note the following passages:

- a. IM 74217 i 2 (cdli.ucla.edu/P004132): pab-nun-mud³⁷ saĝĝa ib-kug, “Pab-nune-inmud,³⁸ the temple administrator of the Ibkuĝ”.
- b. MS 3003 ii 1 (cdli.ucla.edu/P006257): 1N₁₄ 2N₁ še pab-nun-mud (amount of barley for Pab-nune-inmud).
- c. *ACTPC* 37 i 2a: 1N₃₄ 3N₁₄ pab-nun-mud (amount of barley for Pab-nune-inmud).
- d. Nissen *et al.* 1990, 18, no. 4.12 ii 4: 2N₄₀ 1N₂₄ pab-nun-túm³⁹ é ⁴innanak_x(MÛŠ) (amount of malt for “Pab-nunra-altum,⁴⁰ (man/official) of the temple of Innanak”).
- e. *ACTPC* 123 i 1-2: 1N₁₄ 2N₁ še / pab-nun-túm (amount of barley for Pab-nunra-altum).

³¹ Steible 1982, 239, AnNip. 23.

³² See Pomponio 2000, 888–890; Krebernik 2004; Richter 2004, 347f.

³³ See Tallqvist 1938, 436 s.v. “Pap-nun-an-ki”; Cohen 1988, 772; Richter 2004, 104, 106.

³⁴ See *SF* 19 i 5 // 18 xii 20. Cf. Krecher 1978, 156f.; Zand 2009, 180–185.

³⁵ The same name occurs in standard writing (pab-kur-gal) in the so-called “Names and Professions List” (see Archi 1981, 182, line 41).

³⁶ For the meaning of pab/pa₄ (something like “first in rank, leader”), see Sjöberg 1967, 214–217; and Krispijn 2004.

³⁷ Cf. the parallel name pab-en-mud (Pomponio 1987, s.v. “pa₄-en-mud”).

³⁸ For mud representing the finite verbal form /’inmud/ in personal names from the Uruk III and Early Dynastic I–IIIa periods, note the more accurate writing nun-né-ì-mud vs. the archaic spelling nun-mud in two duplicates of a scholarly list of personal names, one dating to the Sargonic period, the other to the Fara period (see Bauer 2014, 13). Pab-nune-inmud (“The Leader—the Prince [i.e., the god Enkík] Created Him”; cf. n. 37 above) is similar in meaning to names such as Lugal-Nanše-mundud (lugal-dnanše-mu-dú) (cf. Marchesi 2006, 72f. n. 381; Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 107).

³⁹ Cf. lugal-nun-túm (*SF* 29 iv 16; see the copy by M. Krebernik on CDLI—cdli.ucla.edu/P010609). For additional parallel names and for the name-pattern, see Marchesi 2004, 191 n. 216, 193 with nn. 225f.; Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 239.

⁴⁰ The name means: “The Leader Is Worthy of the Prince” (cf. nn. 37 and 39 above).

In addition, the abbreviated name Pab-nune (a probable abbreviation of Pab-nune-inmud) is also attested:

f. W 7227,f (ATU 5, pl. 27) i 3: 1N₃₅ pab-nun.

Although an interpretation of PAP.NUN as an epithet of the goddess Innanak cannot be completely ruled out, this evidence strongly suggests that the inscription on our vessel is rather to be interpreted as: ^dinnanak_x(MÜŠ)⁴¹ / pab-nun, “For Innanak, from Pab-nune”. This type of inscription—offeree + offerer (without any dedicatory formula)—is sufficiently well attested in the inscribed materials from the Early Dynastic IIIa period.⁴² Finally, the fact that no other occurrence of the personal name Pab-nune is presently known from the Early Dynastic texts should come as no surprise. In fact, three-element names having nun (in the ergative case) as the second element are extremely rare in the Early Dynastic onomasticon.⁴³

The second example of an “intercultural style” vessel inscribed on the outside is represented by an unprovenanced piece in the Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts at Boston (MFA 1980.71; Plate I). It is a sort of beaker made of greenish black chlorite, which was acquired in 1980 by the Museum and published in 1987 by W. Kelly Simpson.⁴⁴ This artifact, however, was already known: Pierre Amiet had already published it in 1976, when the vessel was still in the hands of a Swiss dealer.⁴⁵

The piece is incomplete: little more than a half of the original vessel is preserved. According to Amiet, the object was repaired in antiquity.⁴⁶ What remains of the relief shows two personages: an anthropomorphic figure and a bizarre hybrid being whose upper body is human, with a bull’s head protruding from its waist and claws for feet. The human-like figure is standing on an altar or building, which may suggest that the personage in question was a god.⁴⁷ Two animals, a snake and a feline (upside down), fill the space between the two main characters.

The authenticity of this vessel was questioned by Oscar White Muscarella, primarily because the iconography and style are odd and unparalleled.⁴⁸ However, the

⁴¹ Cf. n. 20 above.

⁴² See, for instance, Steible 1982, 238f., AnNip. 22.

⁴³ I only know of mes-nun (Steinkeller 2014, 152, fig. 4, vi 2’; cf. *ibid.*, 136) and [mes]-nun-[ki-á]ĝ (UET 8, 2:1’; cf. Marchesi 2004, 168 n. 97). Both nun and pab became completely obsolete as onomastic elements in the Early Dynastic IIIb period.

⁴⁴ In Browarski 1987, 84f.

⁴⁵ See Amiet 1976, 6–8, figs. 10–12 (=Amiet 1986, 271, fig. 73a–c). See also Potts 1994, 256f., fig. 45: 2 and Collon 1998, 37f., fig. 5.

⁴⁶ Amiet 1976, 6.

⁴⁷ Cf. representations of seated deities on Mesopotamian cylinder seals or stelae, which often show the deities as sitting on architectural thrones depicting temple façades (see Seidl 2013, 636f., § 2.1).

⁴⁸ Muscarella 2000, 169f.

object under discussion displays some stylistic features that do have parallels,⁴⁹ while the hybrid creature, though unique, recalls certain composite beings that are peculiar to early Iranian art.⁵⁰

An inscription in clear Fara-period writing⁵¹ is engraved in the empty space between the shoulder of the beast and the skirt of the anthropomorphic figure, but as the space is too small, the inscription partially overlaps the images. Since one of the signs is malformed, Amiet speculated that this vessel might have been inscribed in southeastern Iran, “selon les directives d’un Sumérien résidant loin de son pays”.⁵² Muscarella cited the same argument in support of his hypothesis that the piece is a forgery.⁵³ Finally, on the basis of the inscription, Simpson argued for a possible provenance of the Sumerian city of Eridug:

This [inscription] states that the object was “dedicated (to) the ‘high house of Engur’ (for) Engur, (god of) the totality of the Sea-Land.” If “Engur” is an alternative reading for the name of “Enki,” the water god, as it is thought to be, this object may thus have been dedicated to the chief deity of the city of Eridu in southern Mesopotamia, which in the third millennium B.C. was a thriving seaport near the mouth of the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf.⁵⁴

However, the inscription in question tells a different story. It reads: [...] / é-a ma-ĝu₁₀ / a ma¹ (A×AN)⁵⁵ / abzu(ZU+AB)-ki-dùg / a mu-ru, “E-amaĝu,⁵⁶ mother of Abzu-ki-dug, presented it [to ...]”.⁵⁷ What makes this inscription particularly intriguing is the identity of the woman who commissioned it. It should be noted that women in dedicatory inscriptions are always qualified with reference to their fathers (daughter of such-and-such) or their husbands (wife of such-and-such). The fact that a woman is

49 Cf. BM 128887 (Aruz/Wallenfels 2003, 331, fig. 85; Parpola 2011, 316f., figs. 82 and 83), which, according to Muscarella 2000, 170, “may be the present vessel’s model”.

50 See Pittmann 1984, 70; ead. 2002, 229; Winckelmann 2013, 57 and 64, fig. 3.

51 Note especially the shapes of the signs AMA (line 1’; cf. Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 122 n. 220) and A (line 4’; cf. Krebernik 1998, 280).

52 Amiet 1976, 8. According to Amiet, “la graphie insolite du second signe ama pourrait indiquer que son auteur était un provincial”.

53 Muscarella 2000, 169f.

54 Simpson in Browarski 1987, 84.

55 Although a sign A×AN is sporadically attested in Early Dynastic texts (always in unclear contexts; see UET 2, 357 ii’ 4; IAS 278 ii’ 2, iii’ 16), there can hardly be any doubt that A×AN here represents an incomplete AMA (= LAGAB×AN; cf. n. 52 above).

56 The name é-a ma-ĝu₁₀ (“The Temple Is My Mother”) is unique, as far as I know, but the name-patterns x-a ma-ĝu₁₀ and é-x-ĝu₁₀ are well attested (see Di Vito 1993, 55f. sub 29.1a: 1 and Pomponio 1987, s.vv. “é-ašā₅-ĝu₁₀”, “é-PAD⁷-ĝu₁₀”, and “é-šita-ĝu₁₀”, respectively). Needless to say, the unique occurrence of this name speaks for the authenticity of the inscription in question, and of the piece on which it is inscribed (contra Muscarella 2000, 169f.): why should the alleged forger have invented a Sumerian name when he could simply utilize one of the many known anthroponyms?

57 Cf. already M. Lambert *apud* Amiet 1976, 6.

said to be “mother of such-and-such” is exceptional. There is only one other example of a woman who styles herself as mother of somebody in a dedicatory inscription: Ereš-enimgennâk, mother of Namḥanne (“Nammaḥani”), a Neo-Sumerian ruler of Lagaš.⁵⁸ The question arises: was E-amaḡu, by analogy, the mother of a ruler? The fact that Abzu-kidug occurs with neither a title nor a professional designation supports this interpretation: he must have been a very important person whom everyone knew regardless. This Abzu-kidug was probably the self-same ruler of Nippur who is known from two of his wife’s dedicatory inscriptions.⁵⁹ Notably, in one of these inscriptions, Abzu-kidug is mentioned only by name, not by title,⁶⁰ just as in the case of the inscription of E-amaḡu on the “Boston” beaker.

The object in question thus appears to have been inscribed at Nippur in the Early Dynastic IIIa period,⁶¹ just like the more famous “Inanna and the serpent” vessel. This hypothesis accords with the fact that these two pieces, unique among all examples of inscribed “intercultural style” vessels, are inscribed on their outer surfaces. In both cases, there is no connection between the images they depict and the inscriptions they bear. In point of fact, the “intercultural style” is not intercultural at all. On the contrary, it is culture-specific: the meanings of the various motifs and iconographies that characterize these objects could only be decoded within the culture that produced them,⁶² that is, the Marḥaši or Jiroft culture. For the inhabitants of Mesopotamia the “intercultural style” vessels were merely exotica with bizarre and meaningless decorations. Their value lay in the fact that they were foreign goods coming from a distant country. It is probably no coincidence that almost all of the inscribed pieces date to the Early Dynastic IIIa period,⁶³ when “intercultural style” vessels were presumably rare in Mesopotamia.⁶⁴ Inscriptions were added for the precise purpose of making them into votive objects, that is, vehicles of devotion and/or of requests to deities.⁶⁵ In other words, the act of engraving an inscription served to consecrate the vessel. In this way, texts supersede images and change the function of objects.

⁵⁸ See Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 158.

⁵⁹ Frayne 2008, 355f., Abzu-kidu 1–2.

⁶⁰ Frayne 2008, 355f., Abzu-kidu 2.

⁶¹ For dating the rule of Abzu-kidug to this period, see Marchesi/Marchetti 2011, 36 with n. 74.

⁶² Cf. Maquet 1993.

⁶³ See Marchesi forthcoming.

⁶⁴ Not one inscribed “intercultural style” vessel can be attributed with certainty to the following Early Dynastic IIIb period. On the other hand, there are many uninscribed “intercultural style” vessels from IIIb (Marchetti 2006).

⁶⁵ The two vessels with inscriptions of King Rīmuš (=“Rimush”) of Akkad (see Collon 1998, 38, fig. 6 and Aruz/Wallenfells 2003, 336, no. 233) represent a different case: they were inscribed because they were spoils of war and thus served to commemorate Rīmuš’s victory over Elam and Marḥaši (cf. Klengel/Klengel 1980, 50f.; Steinkeller 1982, 254–257).

Abbreviations

ACTPC	Monaco in press.
ATU	Archaische Texte aus Uruk; vol. 5 = Englund 1994.
BM	Object siglum of the British Museum.
CDLI	<i>Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative</i> (cdli.ucla.edu).
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology.
IAS	Biggs 1974.
IM	Object siglum of the Iraq Museum.
LAK	Deimel 1922.
MS	Object siglum of the Schøyen Collection, Oslo.
SF	Deimel 1923.
UET	Ur Excavations Texts; vol. 2 = Burrows 1935; vol. 8 = Sollberger 1965.
W	Field siglum of objects excavated at Uruk-Warka.

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Plate I: Beaker; chlorite; dimension: H. 7", W. 5". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston – Egyptian Special Purchase Fund, 1980.71 (Photographs © 2015 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

Julia Müller-Klieser

Augensteine im 3. und frühen 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.: Eine Funktionsanalyse

Dieser Beitrag möchte sich hauptsächlich auf das schrifttragende Medium konzentrieren und der Frage nachgehen, ob Inschrift das Trägerobjekt in seiner spezifischen Funktion verändert. Hierfür wird die Aufmerksamkeit auf eine Objektkategorie gelenkt, die ebenfalls für die Legitimation und Sicherung von Herrschaft in der mesopotamischen Gesellschaft von großem Interesse ist. Es handelt sich um kleine, geschliffene Schmucksteine, die überwiegend aus einem gebänderten Stein (z. B. Achat oder Onyx) gefertigt wurden. Sie sind so zugeschliffen, dass sie ein Auge formen – mit einer dunkleren Mitte, die von einem helleren Ring umgeben wird (Abb. 1–3 und 5).

Diese sogenannten Augensteine sind ab dem 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. bis in das Achämenidenreich hinein in Mesopotamien und darüber hinaus bekannt. Einige tragen Weih- und Eigentumsvermerke, doch die Mehrheit der bekannten Augensteine ist unbeschriftet. Ihre zweitausendjährige Geschichte, die nach Quellenlage im ausgehenden Frühdynastikum und der Akkad-Zeit ihren Anfang nahm, sowie der häufige Gebrauch als Grabbeigabe und Weihgabe verdeutlichen den hohen Wert, der Augensteinen im Alten Orient zukam. Die wohl eindrucksvollste Kollektion an Augensteinen datiert in die Zeit des neuassyrischen Herrschers Tiglatpileser III. und kam bei Ausgrabungen unter dem Nordwestpalast in Nimrud ans Licht. Aus der Gruft II stammen mehr als 290 Exemplare, welche Ketten, Ringe, Armbänder, Ohrringe, Gürtel, Bänder und weitere Luxusgegenstände zieren.¹ Schmuckgegenstände, in die Augensteineinlagen eingearbeitet wurden, sind beispielsweise auch in der mittellassyrischen Gruft 45 in Assur gefunden worden; ebenso fanden sich in Gräbern der Königsfriedhöfe in Ur und Kiš Kettenkompositionen aus dem 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr., in die Augensteine integriert waren. Des Weiteren wurden Augensteine als Gründungsbeigaben in Fundamente gegeben, rituell bestattet, in Horten mit anderen Gütern verwahrt oder tauchen in Inventaren von Schatzkammern auf.

Die Frage nach der Funktion von Augensteinen wird in der Forschung auffallend unterschiedlich beantwortet. Augeneinlagen für Statuen sowie dekorative oder apotropäische Elemente auf Gewändern, Möbeln oder in Schmuckstücken, werden als Verwendungsmöglichkeiten angeführt.

Erst kürzlich hat Tim Clayden die Herkunft, Funktion und Datierung von Augensteinen untersucht, welche eine Keilschriftinschrift aufweisen.² Doch schon im Vorfeld zu seiner Studie unterscheidet Clayden zwischen beschrifteten und unbe-

¹ Hussein/Suleiman 2000 und Damerji 1999. Für die Mengenangabe s. Clayden 2009, 44.

² Clayden 2009.

schrifteten Steinen. Für seinen Katalog richtete er sein Hauptaugenmerk auf die Inschriftenträger und kommt gleichfalls in seiner Analyse zu Unterschieden in der spezifischen Funktion.

Für ihn waren beschriftete Augensteine überwiegend dekorative Elemente sowie „primarily high status artefacts closely linked to the king and served a religious function“.³ Diese religiöse Verwendung, beispielsweise der Gebrauch als Weihgabe, würde die Funktion der beschrifteten Augensteine bestimmen. Die Funktion der nicht beschrifteten Steine sei hingegen viel unspezifischer und ihre Verwendungsmöglichkeiten vielfältiger. So konnten diese ebenfalls als dekorative Elemente angebracht werden, aber auch als Amulett getragen, apotropäische Wirkung entfalten – beispielsweise vor Krankheiten schützen. Eine Verwendung als Augeneinlagen ist für Clayden aufgrund der von ihm zusammengestellten Textquellen, der Materialeigenschaften sowie der Auffindungssituationen nicht wahrscheinlich.⁴

Clayden diskutiert jedoch nicht, welchen Einfluss eine Inschrift auf das von ihm untersuchte Objekt ausübt und ob eine solche Unterteilung im Hinblick auf seine Funktionsanalyse überhaupt hilfreich ist. Verändert das Vorhandensein einer Inschrift die tiefere Bedeutung und Funktion eines Objektes und welchem Zweck diene diese? Können wir davon ausgehen, dass zum Beispiel eine angebrachte Weihinschrift die eigentliche, ursprüngliche Bedeutung eines Objektes „überschreibt“ und das Objekt durch die Inschrift eine andere Bedeutung erhält?

Um diesen Fragen nachzugehen, wird im Folgenden nicht zwischen schrifttragenden Artefakten und unbeschrifteten unterschieden, sondern das Phänomen an sich in einen weiteren kulturellen wie ideologischen Kontext eingebunden untersucht – räumlich wie zeitlich.

³ Clayden 2009, 55.

⁴ Ibid.

1 Überblick über Augensteinfunde des 3. und beginnenden 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.⁵

Wie schon einleitend erwähnt, stammen die frühesten Augensteinfunde aus der Zeit des Übergangs vom Frühdynastikum zur Akkad-Zeit und wurden als Kettenbestandteile in Gräbern der Städte Kiš⁶ und Ur⁷ sowie im iranischen Tepe Hissar⁸ gefunden.

Die ersten sicher datierbaren Augensteine tragen den Namen des Ur-III zeitlichen Herrschers Šū-Sîn und kommen aus Uruk (W 16183, VA 12908).⁹ Es handelt sich um zwei Steine, die als Teil einer Kette um eine zentrale Perle mit einer Inschrift Kubātums, geliebte lukur¹⁰ Šū-Sîns, auf einen Silberdraht aufgereiht waren. Diese Kette setzt sich aus zwei separaten Teilen zusammen, flankiert von den beiden Augensteinen. Sie wurde zusammen mit einer weiteren Kette¹¹ in einer kleinen Grube niedergelegt, welche in den Türrdurchgang zur Ziqqurat in das Fundament Urnammus des nord-westlichen Innenzings eingetieft worden war.¹² In letztere war eine Perle mit der Inschrift Ti‘amat-bāštis integriert, ebenfalls geliebte lukur Šū-Sîns.¹³ Wie und wann die beiden Ketten in der Durchgangsmitte niedergelegt wurden, lässt sich aufgrund der Befundsituation nicht eindeutig klären. Denkbar ist eine rituelle Niederlegung im Rahmen eines Baurituals,¹⁴ aber auch eine Verwahrung als profaner Hortschatz¹⁵ ist vorstellbar.

⁵ Hier soll nur eine beispielhafte Zusammenstellung der bekannten Fund- und Befundsituationen sowie der unterschiedlichen Inschriftentypen gegeben werden.

⁶ Cemetery A, Grab 344, vgl. Clayden 2009, 41 mit Verweis auf Watelin/Langdon 1934, 50, pl. XXXV und Moorey 1978, 74–77.

⁷ PG 1422/U12474, PG 1849/U17801 und PG 1854/U17799, vgl. Clayden 2009, 41 mit Verweis auf Woolley 1934, 375, 593, pl. 132, 147 und Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 26 Abb. 21.

⁸ Sog. Hortfund 1 vom Schatzhügel aus der Phase Hissar IIIC, s. Schmidt 1937, 229 und pl. XXXV und LXVI; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 79, pl. 55; Roustaei 2004, 228 Abb. 6.

⁹ Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 65, 102, pl. 45; Limper 1988, 63–66 Nr. 140, Taf. 21–22; Pedde 1992, 80, Nr. 897, Taf. 76; Frayne 1997, 337–338, E3/2.1.4.28; Clayden 2009, 55 A I, 1.

¹⁰ Für den Titel lukur s. Weiershäuser 2008, 235–240; Sharlach 2008.

¹¹ W 16172, IM 28457, IM 26833a–p.

¹² In der Mitte der Tür zu Raum 216 des Urnammu-Zingels, s. Lenzen 1937, 22–24, Taf. 38–39 und Taf. 6, Oe XV5 (nicht Pa XV4). Für den architektonischen Befund s. auch van Ess 2001, 83–86, 362, Innenzingel, Komplex K I, Tür T1 zu Raum R1, Plan 2, 3, 10.

¹³ Für beide Ketten und ihre Deutung als Weihgabe s. Braun-Holzinger 1991, 362, 368 n. P16 und P17 mit weiterer Literatur.

¹⁴ Türen sind die neuralgischen Punkte eines Gebäudes, durch sie können Dämonen und Übel hereinkommen. Aus Sultantepe (Huzirina) sind zwei Rituale überliefert (Tafel STT II 232), die nach dem Einsturz einer Tempeltür durchgeführt wurden, um das Böse vom König und dem ganzen Land fern zu halten. Die wiederhergestellte Tür wurde mit einer Amulettkette gesichert, die aus, auf einen Silberdraht aufgereihten, Augensteinen bestand, s. Ambos 2004, 79–80, 82, 196–197, STT II 232 z. 35–36; Maul 1988, 46–52.

¹⁵ Vgl. parthischer Hortfund mit kassitischen Augensteinen aus Nippur, Clayden 2009, 43 und sog.

Neben Eigentümerinschriften geben frühe Augensteininschriften ab dem Ende des 3. Jahrtausends bzw. des beginnenden 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. auch Hinweise darauf, dass die Steine beliebte Objekte für Weihungen gewesen sind. So informiert uns beispielsweise die Inschrift des aus dem Kunsthandel stammenden Augensteins Warad-Sîns (AO 4505),¹⁶ dass der Herrscher der 1. Dynastie von Larsa diesen dem Mondgott Nanna geweiht hat. Während der Herrschaft Warad-Sîns war die Stadt Ur der Hauptkultort für Nanna, daher ist anzunehmen, dass der Stein ursprünglich dort geweiht wurde.

Ebenfalls aus dem Kunsthandel stammt ein auf der Rückseite beschrifteter Achat-Augenstein (BM 130829) aus der Zeit Hammurabis, den dieser für sein Leben Šamaš geweiht hat (Abb. 1).¹⁷ Der Augenstein BM 89906 (Abb. 2) trägt gleich zwei unterschiedliche Inschriftentypen aus unterschiedlichen Epochen: Eine Weihinschrift aus dem 3. und einen Eigentumsvermerk aus dem 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Auf der einen Seite ist eine stark zerstörte sumerische Weihinschrift an die Göttin Nin-Eanna aufgebracht, die andere Seite nennt Šamši-Adad, den Erbauer des Aššur-Tempels, als Eigentümer.¹⁸

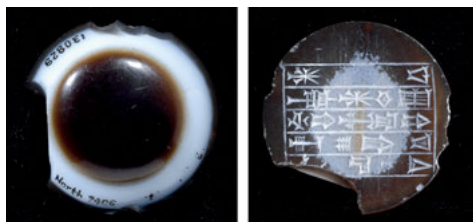


Abb. 1: Vorder- und Rückseite eines altbabylonischen Achat-Augensteins aus dem Kunsthandel mit einer Weihinschrift Hammurabis an Šamaš (BM 130829) © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Die Bezeichnung „Augenstein“ ist eine direkte Übersetzung der mesopotamischen Terminologie: *na₄igi/īnu*,¹⁹ doch keiner der Steine, die wir als solche bezeichnen, trägt einen inschriftlichen Hinweis, der ihn als *na₄igi/īnu* „Augenstein“ identifizieren würde. Eine mögliche Ausnahme stellt ein Objekt dar, welches sich heute im Ashmolean Museum befindet. Es handelt sich um einen doppelten Augenstein, wahrscheinlich aus Onyx, der eine Weihinschrift des altbabylonischen Herrschers

Abī-ešuḫ an die Göttin Ningal trägt. Der ursprüngliche Stein Abī-ešuḫs wurde später zu einem Doppel-Augenstein²⁰ umgearbeitet und eine Weihinschrift Aššur-uballiṣ I.,

Schatzfund aus Babylon, Koldewey 1911, 46–47.

¹⁶ Delaporte 1923, 179 Nr. 817, Taf. 93, 8b (Abbildung); Frayne 1990, 255–256 E4.2.13.30; Braun-Holzinger 1991, 370 P 26; André-Salvini 1995, 72 (Abbildung), 75 Nr. 105; André-Salvini 1999, 378, 396 (Abbildung); Clayden 2009, 55 A II, 4.

¹⁷ Lambert 1969, 69; Kupper/Sollberger 1971, 218, IVC6m; Frayne 1990, 361–362, E4.3.6.2004; Maggio 2012, 137 und Anm. 283, 171, fig. 13.

¹⁸ Galter 1987, 11, 13, 17, 18, Nr. 1; Grayson 1987, 62–63, A.O.39.11.4; Clayden 2009, 55, Appendix A I, 2.

¹⁹ CAD I-J, *īnu* 3, 158.

²⁰ Zwei vergleichbare unbeschriftete Schmucksteine, die ebenfalls jeweils ein Augenpaar formen, wurden als Schieber einer Kette rekonstruiert und waren als Grabausstattung der mittellassyrischen



Abb. 2: Ovaler, dunkelbraun und gräulich-weiß gebänderter Augenstein aus dem Kunsthandel. Auf der einen Seite ist eine sumerische Weihinschrift an Nin-Eanna angebracht, die andere Seite trägt einen altassyrischen Eigentumsvermerk Šamši-Adads (BM 89906)
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ebenfalls für die Göttin Ningal, auf dem Rand hinzugefügt. Leider ist das Objekt nur in einer Skizze ohne ein Foto desselben publiziert,²¹ was keine Überprüfung der Zeichenlesung ermöglicht. Douglas Frayne schlägt vor, die letzten Zeichen der Inschrift Aššur-uballiṣ I. als *igi-ma* zu lesen,²² doch ohne eine Kollation des Originaltextes bleibt dies Spekulation.

Für den Herrschaftsdiskurs im Alten Orient und die Verwendung von beschrifteten Objekten als Legitimationsinstrument ist dieser, leider aus dem Kunsthandel stammende, Doppelaugenstein von besonderem Interesse. Es ist anzunehmen, dass er, wie der Stein Warad-Sîns, ursprünglich in der Stadt Ur geweiht wurde, deren Tempelkomplex während der altbabylonischen Zeit das Hauptheiligtum der Göttin Ningal beherbergte. Der mittelassyrische Herrscher Aššur-uballiṣ I. weihte ihn über 300 Jahre später der ursprünglichen Eigentümerin Ningal erneut ohne die Inschrift seines Vorgängers zu entfernen. Wie und wann Aššur-uballiṣ I. sich den Stein aneignete, lässt sich leider nicht eindeutig klären. Das Verhältnis zwischen Assyrien und Babylonien während der Herrschaft Aššur-uballiṣ I. war anfänglich friedlich und durch politische und diplomatische Beziehungen geprägt.²³ Vielleicht ist der Stein am Ende Aššur-uballiṣ I. Herrschaft bei seinem Rachefeldzug nach Karduniaš, anlässlich der Ermordung seines Enkels und Thronerbens Kadašman-Ḫarbe, in assyrischen Besitz gekommen.²⁴

Dass antiken Augensteinen auch heute noch Bedeutung zukommt, belegen die Exemplare der Collection Derek Content, die als Bakshish bei Geschäftsabschlüssen den Besitzer gewechselt haben (Abb. 3).

Gruft 45 in Assur (wahrscheinlich der weiblichen Bestattung) beigegeben, s. Haller 1954, 126 Abb. 159 und 142 Abb. 166, Taf. 28, t1–2; Taf. 34 h, k; Taf. 35 a, c.

²¹ Langdon 1923, 10.

²² Frayne 1990, E4.3.8.2.

²³ S. Faist 2001, 207–208.

²⁴ S. Clayden 2009, 51 mit dem Verweis auf die enorme Propagandawirkung einer assyrischen „rededication“ in Ur, einer der ältesten Kultstädte Babyloniens.



Abb. 3: Augensteine als Bakshish aus dem Vorderen Orient, Collection Derek Content, Houlton, Maine (nach Dubin 2006, 306 Abb. 326).

2 Textquellen

Nicht nur die Steine an sich geben Auskunft über ihre Verwendung und ihre Besitzer, sondern auch in Textquellen wie Inventare, Listen und Notizen finden Augensteine Erwähnung. Diese schriftlichen Belege sind ab der Ur III-Zeit häufig und liefern ebenfalls Informationen zu deren Verwendung sowie Herkunft.²⁵

Eine Inventarliste aus Umma²⁶ verzeichnet drei *ḫulālu*-Augensteine unter der Beute aus Anšan, die mit der militärischen Zerstörung Anšans durch Šulgi in seinem 34. Regierungsjahr in Verbindung gebracht werden kann.²⁷ Die Liste beinhaltet eine beträchtliche Menge an Waffen sowie wertvolle Gegenstände aus Metall, Siegel, Perlen, Ringe Ketten, Pektoreale und Schmuckstücke – darunter Augensteine, die aus den feindlichen Schatzkammern Elams entwendet wurden.

Dass Augensteine auch als Handelsware mit anderen Luxusgütern zusammen verhandelt wurden, belegt eine Liste aus Ur (UET 3 345), die in das Jahr 4 der Herrschaft Šu-Sins datiert und kostbare Steine und Metalle nennt, die Händler gebracht haben, darunter sechs *ḫulālu*-Augensteine.²⁸ Weitere Texte listen *ḫulālu*-Augensteine als Bestandteile von Tempelschätzen auf, wie beispielsweise der Text YBC 3671 für das Heiligtum der Inanna (Ninegal) von Eres²⁹ oder geben Hinweise auf deren handwerkliche Weiterverarbeitung, wie die Notiz UET 3 687, welche 14 *ḫulālu*-Augensteine

²⁵ Im Folgenden wird nur ein kurzer Überblick gegeben, da eine Zusammenstellung aller textlichen Belege von Augensteinerwähnungen des 3. und beginnenden 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. den Rahmen dieses Artikels übersteigt. Verwiesen sei auf die Zusammenstellung bei Clayden 2009, 61–62 (Appendix B i–v), die allerdings um einige hier angeführte Belege zu ergänzen ist.

²⁶ AO 6604, s. Clayden 2009, 61 ii. a.

²⁷ Potts 1999, 135–136, 138 Tab. 5.2 und Sigrist/Gomi 1991, 323.

²⁸ Legrain 1947, 187, 213 Nr. 345, r. 1, 10, Taf. XLII; Clayden 2009, 62 Appendix B, ii c.

²⁹ Clayden 2009, 61 Appendix B, ii. b; Leemans 1952, 28 Z. 12.

erwähnt, die im Namen von Nanna und Ningal verbucht und mit Gold zu zwei halbmondförmigen Kränzen weiterverarbeitet wurden.³⁰

Auch Augenstein-Weihungen für Götter sind schriftlich erfasst worden. Die Urkunde P. 912 aus Puzriš-Dagān informiert uns über eine Weihung von vier *ḫulālu*-Augensteinen, die in einem Schmuckstück (in diesem Fall ein Armband) mit weiteren kostbaren Materialien zusammengestellt waren und einer Gottheit geweiht wurden.³¹ Schmuckzusammensetzungen für Götter sind auch Inhalt der Liste UTI 6 3800, die prosopografisch in die Zeit Šu-Suens datiert und höchstwahrscheinlich ebenfalls aus Puzriš-Dagān stammt.³² In einen hier aufgelisteten Kranz aus unterschiedlichen Perlen, der für den „Wasser-Trink-Ort“ Šulgis in Ur bestimmt war, wurde ein in Gold gefasstes, dreifach gestreiftes Achat-Auge sowie eine Mondsichel integriert. Zudem erwähnt ein Inventartext aus dem Ur III-zeitlich Inanna-Tempel in Nippur ein in Gold gefasstes *ḫulālu*-Auge unter den Opfergaben.³³

Für das beginnende 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. finden sich desgleichen textliche Belege, dass Augensteine Bestandteile von Tempelinventaren sowie Tempelausstattung waren und darüber hinaus auch als Weihgaben Verwendung fanden.

So nennt der altbabylonische Text OBTIV 106 16 *ḫulālu*-Augen für Ninšubur von Ishchali neben weiteren Schmucksteinen und Perlen aus *ḫulālu*-Stein, Karneol sowie Gold.³⁴ Der Text stammt aus dem Kitium-Heiligtum und wurde in Raum 5 S 29³⁵ gefunden – dem Raum hinter dem kleineren, nordöstlichen Heiligtum. Der Text UET 5, 278 aus dem Isin-Larsa-zeitlichen Ur beschreibt einen *ḫulālu*-Stein, der die Form eines Auges aufweist, mit einer Inschrift versehen und von Ur-Kununna für die Göttin Ningal geweiht wurde.³⁶ Die kostbare Ausgestaltung von Tempelinterieur mit Augensteinen illustriert die Jahresformel Ḫammurabi 14, die einen Thron für Inanna anführt, der mit Gold, Silber, *ḫulālu*-Steinen in Form von Augen und weiteren Edelsteinen sowie Lapislazuli dekoriert war.³⁷

Die angeführten Inschriften und Textquellen zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass Augensteine als Besitz von Göttern und Herrschern kenntlich gemacht, geweiht,

30 Legrain 1947, 187, 225 Nr. 687 Taf. LXXV; Leemans 1952, 28 Anm. 111.

31 Tohrū/Yildiz 2002, 7–9 n. 52, zuletzt bei Paoletti 2012, 44, 50–56, 235–236, 415–427.

32 Ist Um 3800 bei Paoletti 2012, 44–50, 236–238, 543–556.

33 Zettler 1992, 293, 6 NT 606+668, 687–688 und 902, IM 61716, obv. iii 25: *nir7 igi kù-sig₁₇ [abgar]-ra gug g[í]d [xxx] ...* Für ḡar „einkapseln“ (von Rollsiegeln und Perlen mit Metall) s. Paoletti 2012, 161.

34 Greengus 1986, 46–48 OBTIV 106, A21998 und Maggio 2012, 78–79.

35 Raumbezeichnung nach OIC 20, 77, fig. 60, zusammen mit den Texten OBTIV 104–105, die ebenfalls Auflistungen von Gütern enthalten, vgl. Greengus 1979, 13 und Anm. 54; hier die Raumbezeichnung 1 S 29, da sich die Nummerierung bei Greengus nach den unpublizierten Feldnotizen richtet, s. Greengus 1979, 12 Anm. 44.

36 Figulla/Martin 1953, 11, pl. LVIII, Nr. 278, U 352; Van de Mieroop 1989, 397 Anm. 1; Van de Mieroop 1992, 255; Maggio 2012, 83, 137.

37 Horsnell 1999, 121–122, 116 Ha 14; Maggio 2012, 94.

in Tempelschätzen aufbewahrt, als Beute beschlagnahmt oder von Händlern verhandelt wurden sowie für die Dekoration von Ausstattungsgegenständen Verwendung fanden. Des Weiteren liefert der archäologische Befund Hinweise darauf, dass Augensteine im 3. und beginnenden 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. als wertvolle Grabbeigaben in Form von Schmuckstücken in Gräber gelegt sowie im sakralen Kontext deponiert werden konnten.

3 Material und Herkunft

Unzählige Steinartefakte aus den unterschiedlichsten Gesteinsarten wurden bei Ausgrabungen im Alten Orient zutage gefördert, was nicht verwunderlich ist, da das Material „Stein“ ein sehr beständiges ist und die Jahrtausende im Boden gut überdauert. Ebenso liefern mesopotamische Textquellen die unterschiedlichsten Gesteinsnamen; doch die antiken Bezeichnungen auf die jeweiligen Gesteinsarten zu übertragen und mit modernen Gesteinsnamen gleichzusetzen, ist in den seltensten Fällen leicht und eindeutig.

Die meisten Augensteine sind aus gebändertem Chalzedon hergestellt, hauptsächlich Achat, Onyx und Sardonyx.³⁸ Diese Varietäten des Chalzedons kommen in Mesopotamien selbst nicht in nennenswerter Quantität vor und mussten, wie auch andere Schmucksteine, importiert werden. Mögliche Herkunftsgebiete mit heute bekannten Lagerstätten befinden sich östlich von Mesopotamien in Zentralasien und auf dem indischen Subkontinent sowie auf der Arabischen Halbinsel und in Ägypten.³⁹

Textquellen des 3. und 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. nennen Anšan, Marḥaši und Meluhḥa als Lieferanten und Bezugsquellen für kostbare Schmuck- und Edelsteine, doch ist nicht sicher, ob es sich hier um die eigentlichen Lagerstätten und Herkunftsgebiete oder um Werkstätten sowie Transitstationen gehandelt hat.⁴⁰

Die reiche Ausstattung der Gräber des Königsfriedhofs von Ur mit seinen Schmuckgegenständen aus Edelsteinen wie Lapislazuli, Karneol und Chalzedon, welche mit Gold und Silber zu kontrastreichen und schimmernden Kostbarkeiten verarbeitet den hohen Stand des handwerklichen Geschicks aufzeigen, gibt Hinweise auf internationale Kontakte der mesopotamischen Stadtstaaten wie Ur ab der Mitte des 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Generell wird davon ausgegangen, dass das Rohmaterial

³⁸ Clayden 2009, 40 mit dem Hinweis, dass keiner der Augensteine bis jetzt eindeutig mikroskopisch bestimmt wurde.

³⁹ Bouquillon/Poirot 1995, 35, 36–37 Carte 1; Dubin 2006, 35 und Karte.

⁴⁰ Potts 1994, 194–197 für Herstellung von Steinperlen in Werkstätten des iranischen Hochlandes wie Tal-i Malyan, Shahdad, Shahr-i Sokhta II und Tepe Hissar, fig. 36; Moorey 1994, 89, 98; Clayden 2009, 40–41.



Abb. 4: Frühdynastische, rote Karneol-Perle mit aufgeätztem Muster aus dem Königsfriedhof in Ur, wahrscheinlich Grab PG55 (BM 120598)
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oder vorgefertigte Perlenrohlinge nach Mesopotamien importiert und in sumerischen Werkstätten zu Schmuckstücken weiterverarbeitet wurden. Eine Ausnahme stellen rote Karneol-Perlen dar, die mit weißen, künstlich eingeätzten Mustern verziert waren und in einigen Gräbern in Ur sowie in Kiš zu Tage kamen (Abb. 4).⁴¹ Vergleichbare und mit derselben Technik verzierte Stücke, stammen aus Fundorten am

Indus, aus Afghanistan sowie dem Iran. Es ist nicht auszuschließen, dass diese in Werkstätten der großen Städte der Induskultur gefertigt⁴² und über Zwischenhandelsstationen bis nach Mesopotamien gelangt sind. Zumindest belegen die rot-weißen Karneol-Perlen den Kontakt mit Handelspartnern, die wertvolle Steine aus den Lagerstätten des indischen Kontinents sowie Zentralasiens verhandelten.⁴³ Daher verweist Woolley auf die Indusregion, neben Karneol, ebenfalls als Lieferant für gebänderten Stein in der Ur III-Zeit.⁴⁴

In Fundorten wie Lothal, Chanhu-Daro und Mohenjo-Daro wurden bisher keine Augensteine im mesopotamischen Sinne gefunden. Doch erinnern die Kreismuster der Karneol-Perlen ebenfalls sehr stark an Augen und können mit den, noch heute in Tibet beliebten, zylindrischen *dZi*-Amuletten in Verbindung gebracht werden. Tibetische *dZi*-Steine werden heute hauptsächlich aus Achat in derselben Technik wie die Karneol-Perlen des 3. Jahrtausends hergestellt. Die wertvollsten sind allerdings solche, die aus gebändertem und gemustertem Achat gefertigt sind und durch die natürliche Maserung mehrere Augenkreise aufweisen. Der Legende nach sind *dZi*-Steine übernatürlichen, numinosen Ursprungs – von den Göttern und nicht von Menschenhand geschaffen – und schützen vor Unglück.⁴⁵ Nicht alle *dZi*-Amulette sind zylindrisch. Die sogenannten *luk mik* (oder *lumik*) „Ziegenaugen“ bestehen, wie die mesopotamischen Augensteine, aus einem gebänderten Stein, der ein natürliches Auge nachahmt und beschützen den Träger besonders auf Reisen.

Der Persische Golf spielte durch die Handelskontakte, die er ermöglichte, über die Jahrtausende hinweg eine wichtige Rolle in Mesopotamien. Unter den Larsa-zeitlichen Urkunden aus dem Ningal-Tempel in Ur, die steuerliche Abgaben (*zà-10*)

⁴¹ Woolley 1934, 373, pls. 133–134; Potts 1994, 198–199; Reade 1979, 5.

⁴² Dubin 2006, 33 Abb. 13; Reade 1979, 5, 24–26. Für Hinweise auf Werk- und Verarbeitungsstätten der Induskultur s. Mackay 1943, 199–202 für Chanhu Daro und Rao 1973, 103 für Lothal.

⁴³ Reade 1979, 24–26.

⁴⁴ Woolley 1934, 374.

⁴⁵ Dubin 2006, 217.

und Votivgaben (a-ru-a) von seefahrenden Händlern aus Dilmun dokumentieren,⁴⁶ befinden sich neben Silber, Kupfer, Edelsteinen und Elfenbein auch Fischeaugen-Steine.⁴⁷ Diese zà-10-Urkunden aus der Zeit der frühen Larsa-Könige stammen aus dem Ganunmaḥ und wurden an die Göttin Ningal entrichtet.⁴⁸ Zu dieser Zeit war Ur ein Seefahrer-Zentrum und ein Umschlagplatz für allerlei Luxus- und Importgüter aus fernen Ländern. Das paradiesische Land Dilmun, welches als Ort beschrieben wird, an dem es sich wie die Götter leben lässt, wird mit der Insel Bahrain identifiziert,⁴⁹ doch wurde auch das Industal als mögliche Lokalisierung vorgeschlagen.⁵⁰

Für die späteren Perioden ist ebenfalls die Arabische Halbinsel, vornehmlich Jemen und Oman, als Lieferant für gebänderten Stein belegt.⁵¹ Des Weiteren werden Vergleichsfunde zu den mesopotamischen Augensteinen von der Insel Failaka aus spätbronzezeitlichen Kulturschichten erwähnt.⁵²

Der archäologische Kontext, die Textquellen, die Verwendung als Weihgabe und das aus fernen Ländern importierte Material der Augensteine, verweisen auf den hohen Stellenwert, den diese Steine in der mesopotamischen Gesellschaft inne hatten. Doch was genau sind die Qualitäten, die dem Stein zugeschrieben wurden, die seinen Wert ausmachten? Hierfür müssen sowohl die visuellen Eigenschaften als auch die Materialität des Steins und die daraus resultierenden Eigenschaften in die Untersuchung mit einbezogen werden.

4 Konzeption von Stein

Das mesopotamische Konzept von „Stein“ *na₄/abnu* unterscheidet sich von unserem heutigen Verständnis von unbelebter Materie. Mythen und Epen liefern Hinweise auf

⁴⁶ Potts 1994, 197 (Anm. 175 für Textbelege) bezeichnet Dilmun in diesem Falle eher als Zwischenhandelsstation, nicht als Herkunftsgebiet der Luxusgüter.

⁴⁷ Siehe u. a. Maggio 2012, 80–87; Clayden 2009, 42, 62 (Appendix B, iii a–h); Leemans 1960, 23–36; Oppenheim 1954, 7; Figulla/Martin 1953, 12 (Nr. 282, 286, 292, 295), 19 (Nr. 558), 22 (Nr. 678), 24 (Nr. 795). Allerdings ist nicht sicher, ob es sich bei diesen „Fischeaugen“-Steinen um realistische Augensteine handelt oder ob der Name nur eine Beschreibung eines bestimmten Glanzes bzw. Effektes ist, analog zu unseren heutigen Steinnamen wie beispielsweise „Katzenauge“, s. Schuster-Brandis 2008, 12.

⁴⁸ Maggio 2012, 80; Leemans 1960, 23–36.

⁴⁹ Potts 2009, 31.

⁵⁰ Kramer 1964, 44–52.

⁵¹ Dies belegen zylindrische Perlen aus *pappardilû*-Stein (vermutlich Achat) mit Inschriften Sanheribs, welche Karibili, König von Saba', als Tributbringer derselben nennen und die von Sanherib höchstwahrscheinlich beim Bau des neuen Akitu-Festhauses in Assur in das Fundament gelegt wurden: BM 89910, BM 89912, BM 89926 und wahrscheinlich auch BM 89291, s. Frahm 1997, 145–146 c und Galter 1987, Nr. 51, 53, 66 und 47.

⁵² Clayden 2009, 43; Howard-Carter 1986, 307, 309 Anm. 15, Abb. 128–129.

die Konzeption und Bedeutung des Materials „Stein“ im Alten Orient. Im mythologischen Kontext des Heldenepos Lugal-e formt der Gott Ninurta nach dem Sieg über das Urwesen Asakku aus dem Unterlegenen das Gebirge und bestimmt das Schicksal für jeden Stein. Einige Steine werden verflucht, andere werden mit positiven Eigenschaften belegt und sie erhalten ihren Platz und ihre Aufgaben in der Welt. Der Mythos veranschaulicht, dass Steine nicht als unbelebte Materie gedacht wurden, sondern mit spezifischen Kräften und Eigenschaften ausgestattet waren, die ihre Funktion bestimmten.⁵³ Dass Substanz und Funktion in der mesopotamischen Vorstellung nicht eindeutig voneinander getrennt werden, verdeutlicht auch die ab der altbabylonischen Zeit seriell vervielfältigte lexikalische Liste *ur₅-ra = ħubullu XVI*.⁵⁴ Dieses nach Sachgruppen gegliederte „Wörterbuch der materiellen Welt“, weist keine klare Trennung zwischen den unterschiedlichen Gesteinsarten und den daraus gefertigten Gegenständen auf – Material und bearbeitete Formen werden gleichrangig aufgelistet.⁵⁵

Die Qualität des Unvergänglichen als Eigenschaft von Steinen thematisiert die neunte Tafel des Gilgameš-Epos, die einen ewigen Garten aus Edelsteinen, in dem Steine wie Bäume wachsen, bildlich beschreibt, welchen Gilgameš am Rande der Welt vorfindet.⁵⁶

Das Wissen um Herkunft, Vorkommen und Abbauförmlichkeiten der einzelnen Gesteinsarten war im rohstoffarmen Mesopotamien nicht immer vorhanden; Steine wurden hauptsächlich über ihre äußeren visuellen Eigenschaften wie Farbe und Muster klassifiziert und bewertet.⁵⁷ Dies verdeutlicht die Liste *abnu šikinšu*, das Steinbestimmungsbuch und Referenzwerk des Beschwörungspriesters, welches wohl ab der mittellassyrischen Zeit zur Fachliteratur des Ritualexperten gezählt haben dürfte. Der älteste bekannte Textvertreter der Liste *abnu šikinšu* datiert wahrscheinlich in die Zeit Tiglatpilesers I., doch ist davon auszugehen, dass diese Liste ältere Vorläufer hatte.⁵⁸

Die Textquellen nennen vor allem den *nír/ħulālu*-Stein als Material aus dem Augensteine gefertigt wurden. Der *ħulālu* wird als dunkel und hell gebänderter Stein beschrieben – wahrscheinlich handelt es sich um Achat oder Onyx; jedoch gibt es ebenfalls Hinweise darauf, dass *ħulālu* generell als Überbegriff für gebänderten Stein verwendet wurde.⁵⁹

Im Lugal-e-Mythos gehört der *ħulālu* zu den Steinen, die mit positiven Eigenschaften belegt wurden⁶⁰ und ab dem ausgehenden 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. zählt der *ħulālu*

53 Schuster-Brandis 2008, 16–17.

54 Postgate 1997, 214.

55 Schuster-Brandis 2008, 10; Postgate 1997, 213–215 mit Text 1.

56 George 2003, 672–675; Schuster-Brandis 2008, 15.

57 Vgl. Schuster-Brandis 2008, 4 und Anm. 14.

58 Schuster-Brandis 2008, 5–6, 18.

59 Ibid., 12, 436.

60 van Dijk 1983, 120.

zu den Steinen, die häufig als Heilmittel Verwendung fanden. So findet sich der Stein beispielsweise in Amulettketten mit prophylaktischer und heilender Wirkung,⁶¹ aber auch in Ritualanweisungen sowie als Ingredienz des sogenannten „Weihwassers“.⁶² Zusammen mit Karneol, Lapislazuli, *papparminu* und *pappardilû* gehört der *ḫulālu* zu der apotropäischen Standardkombination des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr., die vor jeglichem Übel und Krankheit schützt.⁶³

5 Das Auge als Symbol

Das Material, der Stein an sich, war belegt mit einer ihm innewohnenden, individuellen Kraft. Aber was haben die Menschen im Alten Mesopotamien in der Augenform gesehen? Wessen Auge nutzte das Medium des Steins, um durch es zu sehen?

Die Götter als personifizierte Kräfte des Kosmos erklärten die Kausalität von Phänomenen der mesopotamischen Welt. Textquellen veranschaulichen, dass Götter als allsehend und omnipräsent vorgestellt wurden. Marduk ist beispielsweise der allsehende Gott im babylonischen Welterschöpfungsmythos *Enūma eliš*: Allsehend gleichgesetzt mit allwissend.⁶⁴ Die Götter *Šin* und *Šamaš* sind durch ihre Personifizierung mit Mond und Sonne ebenfalls mit Augen ausgestattet, die vom Himmel herab sehen können; dahinter steckt die Vorstellung von Sonne und Mond als Augen des Himmels, denen nichts entgeht.⁶⁵ Durch diese Fähigkeit ist *Šamaš* als „Herr des Gerichts“ unfehlbar in seinem Urteil, da er vom Himmel herab alles sieht. Sein Symbol, die Sonnenscheibe, weist in einigen Darstellungen im Zentrum zwei konzentrische Kreise auf, die als sein himmlisches Auge gedeutet werden können.⁶⁶

Die Vorstellung der Omnipräsens der Götter lässt vermuten, dass auch das aus Stein geformte Auge einer numinosen Ebene angehört. Die Erwähnung von Augen-

⁶¹ Für eine Zusammenstellung der Ketten s. Schuster-Brandis 2008, 436, Nr. 81.

⁶² Für die Herstellung und Zusammensetzung von Weihwasser s. Maul 1994, 42–44.

⁶³ Schuster-Brandis, 2008, 11 verweist auf die hierarchische Klassifikation der unterschiedlichen Gesteinsarten in der Liste *abnu šikinšu*, die wichtigsten und am häufigsten verwendeten werden zuerst genannt; 436, Nr. 81.

⁶⁴ Die erste Tafel des Welterschöpfungssepos beschreibt die Geburt Marduks und seine göttlichen Eigenschaften. Marduk war mit vier Augen und vier Ohren ausgestattet, die seiner Befähigung alles zu hören und zu sehen Ausdruck verleihen und sinnbildlich seine vollkommene Allwissenheit hervorheben, s. Lambert 2013, 54–57.

⁶⁵ S. Tallqvist 1938, 445. Ebenfalls geben theophore Personennamen Hinweise auf die allgegenwärtig sehenden Qualitäten von Göttern: „*Šin/Šamaš* ist das Auge des Landes“, „*Šamaš* ist mein Auge“, „*Šin* sieht“ bei Pettazzoni 1955, 115–117.

⁶⁶ Diese Darstellungen sind ab der Akkad-Zeit belegt. Für Beispiele aus der Glyptik s. Boehmer 1965, Nr. 729 Abb. 237; 951 Abb. 382; 1220 Abb. 525; weitere Beispiele finden sich auf der Ur III-zeitlichen Stele aus Susa, s. Börker-Klähn 1982, 161, Nr. 100 und auf Kudurru, s. Seidl 1989.

steinen unter den Gesteinsarten in der *Naturalis Historiae* von Plinius d. Ä. deutet gleichermaßen in diese Richtung:

Das Auge des Belos ist weißlich und umschließt eine schwarze Pupille, die aus der Mitte mit goldener Farbe glänzt; der Stein ist wegen seiner Eigenart dem heiligsten Gott der Assyrer geweiht.⁶⁷

6 Konzeption des Blicks

Das Auge als Symbol ist in Mesopotamien weit verbreitet. Es scheint, dass dieses in der mesopotamischen Kunst von besonderer Bedeutung war. Angefangen mit den Augenidolen des 4. Jahrtausends v. Chr. (Abb. 5),⁶⁸ fröhdynastischen Spielbrettern,⁶⁹ Applikationen und Darstellungen auf Gefäßen⁷⁰ usw. Die große Bandbreite der Darstellungen macht es allerdings schwierig, die Symbolik in ihrer Vielfalt zu deuten.



Abb. 5: Augensteine BM 103344, BM 89878 und Augenidol BM 126493 © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Dass das Auge ein mächtiges Symbol ist, ist nicht verwunderlich. Die menschliche Wahrnehmung und Vorstellung der Welt wird von Sinneswahrnehmungen maßgeblich beeinflusst. Hier spielt das Sehen eine wichtige Rolle. Aber die Augen dienen auch als Transmitter von Gefühlen. So ist besonders die Augenpartie Kommunikationsraum und spiegelt Befinden, Absichten und Gefühle eines Menschen wider. Auf sozialer Ebene sind die Augen der Einstieg, oft sogar das weitgeöffnete Tor zum Innenleben anderer Menschen.

Durch Blicke entstehen soziale Bindungen. Das Augenspiel dient der Kontaktaufnahme und der Verständigung – nicht nur bei Erwachsenen wird geflirtet und „schöne Augen“ gemacht, sondern auch schon Säuglinge nutzen meisterlich dieses Medium des Austausches und der Kommunikation.

⁶⁷ Buch XVII, LV, 149, nach König/Hopp 1994, 105.

⁶⁸ Für die Datierung der Augenidole s. Emberling 2002, 82–90.

⁶⁹ Woolley 1934, 275–278, pl. 95–96.

⁷⁰ Als Beispiel kann hier eine Steinschale aus Ḫafaḡi angeführt werden (Orthmann 1975, 120–121 Abb. x), doch gibt es noch zahlreiche weitere Darstellungen.

Das Auge kann sinnbildlich als Verbindung zwischen äußerer und innerer Realität angesehen werden – der Spiegel der Seele. Das offene Auge symbolisiert Leben und Kraft, das geschlossene Schlaf und Tod.

So steht das Auge nicht nur für den Akt des Sehens. Auch unsere heutige physiologische Vorstellung von visueller Wahrnehmung geht über das eigentliche „Sehen“ hinaus. Eine Vielzahl an Prozessen ist an der Informationsverarbeitung beteiligt, die das Auge durch das einfallende Licht aufnimmt. Als visuelles System wird die Verarbeitung von Reizen bezeichnet, die durch das Auge aufgenommen und vom Gehirn durch Wahrnehmungsprozesse wie Extraktion und Erkennen von relevanter Information und deren Interpretation weiterverarbeitet werden. Das Auge ist nur ein Sehwerkzeug, erst das Wahrnehmung erzeugende Gehirn befähigt uns, durch kognitive Prozesse die uns umgebende Welt zu erkennen.⁷¹ Wahrnehmung ist somit das Ergebnis bewusster sowie unbewusster Informationsverarbeitung von Sinneseindrücken und Reizen.

Auch die Konzeption von Sehen in den mesopotamischen Kulturen war gleichgesetzt mit einem kognitiven Prozess. Irene Winter beschreibt das Sehen als primären Zugang zu religiösen und ästhetischen Erfahrungen im Alten Orient.⁷² Für sie ist der eigentliche Wert von Objekten erst durch den Akt des „Gesehenwerdens“ in der mesopotamischen Ideologie verankert. Das Gesehenwerden von Gebäuden, Statuen und Luxusgegenständen zieht eine Reaktion nach sich. Freude ist die Reaktion auf die visuelle Wahrnehmung von hohem kunsthandwerklichen Geschick von Göttern und Herrschern, die die direkten Profiteure dieser in ihrem Auftrag ausgeführten Objekte sind. Das Volk hingegen, die Untergebenen, reagieren mit Bewunderung und Ehrfurcht – was Entzücken und Freude bei den Göttern und Herrschern auslöst, erweckt tiefe Ehrfurcht bei den Untergebenen. Doch sowohl Freude als auch Ehrfurcht verdeutlichen die Beziehung zwischen visuellem Erlebnis und der Reaktion des Publikums. Daher erzeugt erst die Interaktion zwischen Objekt und Betrachter den speziellen Wert des Anschauungsobjektes. Beide Reaktionen – Freude und Ehrfurcht – sind im Sehen begründet.

Winter hat gezeigt, dass im Alten Orient die Betrachtung eines Gegenstandes eine reziproke Handlung ist. Etwas aktiv anzusehen bestimmt den Wert des jeweiligen Objektes, positiv wie negativ. Im Falle der Augensteine haben wir einen doppelt reziproken Austausch zwischen dem Betrachter des Steinauges und dem zurückblickenden Auge. Sehen – etwas betrachten und wahrnehmen – ist das Instrument schlechthin, welches soziales Miteinander formt und gestaltet. Dieses Instrument kann aber auch gefährliche Auswirkungen auf das Objekt der Begierde haben. Je nach der Intention des Betrachters kann es als Werkzeug eingesetzt und genutzt werden.

⁷¹ Für weitere Informationen zur visuellen Wahrnehmung s. Nänni 2009 und Ditzinger 2013.

⁷² Winter 2010, 456.

7 Der Böse Blick

Die Angst vor dem bösen Blick, davor, dass von dem Akt des „Angesehenwerdens“ Übel und Leid ausgeht, ist weltweit verbreitet und in vielen antiken wie rezenten Kulturen vorzufinden. So ist die Idee, dass durch den Bösen Blick Unheil, Unglück, Krankheit und Tod verursacht werden, auch noch heutzutage in vielen Kulturen Europas, Asiens sowie Amerikas allgegenwärtig.⁷³ Das Phänomen des Bösen Blicks hat eine Reihe von apotropäischen Handlungen hervorgebracht, die als Abwehrmechanismen eingesetzt werden können: Augenimitationen aus Glas, wie beispielsweise Nazar-Amulette, die „Hand der Fatima“ (auch Hamsa) sowie weitere Augendekorationen und Spiegel sind gängige Symbole, um sich und besonders Kinder vor dem Bösen Blick im Nahen Osten, Indien und Nordafrika zu schützen.

Auf die Frage, wie der böse Blick erworben wird, gibt und gab es je nach Kulturkreis verschiedene Antworten. Es soll sogar ganze Berufsgruppen gegeben haben, denen der Böse Blick anhaftete. Kulturübergreifend lässt sich feststellen, dass die Ausübung des Bösen Blicks mit der Fähigkeit des Sehens einhergeht und dass Gefühle wie Neid und Missgunst unzertrennlich mit ihm verbunden scheinen.⁷⁴ Neid und Eifersucht zeigen sich in den Augen genauso deutlich wie Liebe, wenn der Betrachter das Objekt der Begierde ansieht.

Im Gegensatz zu dem weit verbreiteten Glauben an den Bösen Blick, räumlich wie zeitlich, finden sich unter den zahlreichen mesopotamischen Beschwörungstexten nur eine vergleichsweise geringe Anzahl Texte, die das *igi ħul* (akk. *īnu lemuttu*)⁷⁵ „böse Auge“ und dessen Auswirkungen thematisieren. Es handelt sich um sumerische, akkadische wie auch zweisprachige Texte, hauptsächlich aus der altbabylonischen Zeit.⁷⁶ Aus der neuassyrischen Zeit stammen zwei Textvertreter aus Assur (VAT 10018, VAT 14226), die den Bösen Blick als alltägliches Ärgernis beschreiben, welches Schaden anrichtet, Missgunst, Streit und Unglück hervorbringt. Als Urheber werden Individuen aus dem Umfeld des Betroffenen genannt: Vater, Mutter, Bruder, Schwester und Nachbarn, die ihm feindlich gesinnt sind.⁷⁷ In den älteren altbabylonischen Beschwörungen wird keine solche Personifizierung des Aussenders von Unglück vorgenommen – vielleicht verbirgt sich hinter dem nicht konkretisierten Urheber die Vorstellung eines Dämons, der in das häusliche Umfeld eindringt und Unheil anrichtet, wie Markham J. Geller vermutet.⁷⁸

⁷³ S. Maloney 1976, Hauschild 1982 und Dundes 1992 mit weiterer Literatur.

⁷⁴ Budge 1978, 356 und Garrison/Arensberg 1976, 286–328.

⁷⁵ Für die nicht unproblematische Gleichsetzung von *īnu lemuttu* mit dem sumerischen *igi ħul* s. Geller 2003, 117, 127.

⁷⁶ Eine Zusammenstellung bei Geller 2003, 116.

⁷⁷ Geller 2008, 54–55, Z. 2–4.

⁷⁸ Geller 2003, 119–120.

Die sumerischen Beschwörungen BL 3 und TCL 16 89⁷⁹ beginnen mit der Identifizierung des Unheilaussenders als drachengesichtigen (igi muš ħuš) Menschen (lú-ùlu) – igi ħul wird hier eindeutig als menschlich personifiziert. Dieser menschliche Feind richtet allerdings nicht nur Unheil im häuslichen Umfeld des Patienten an, sondern er bringt generell Unglück über das ganze Land,⁸⁰ was in einem signifikanten Gegensatz zu den akkadischen Beschwörungen steht. Geller sieht in den beschriebenen Unglücksszenarien, die der drachengesichtige Mensch in den sumerischen Beschwörungen hervorbringt, die Beschreibung eines Krankheitsbildes, welches er als „Paranoia“ diagnostiziert⁸¹ und weist eindrücklich darauf hin, dass eine Gleichsetzung von igi ħul mit dem akkadischen *īnu lemuttu*, dem „Bösen Blick“ und dessen Deutung als Neid und Missgunst, wie sie sich in vielen Kulturen heute noch findet, für die sumerische Zeit problematisch ist.⁸²

Auch Marie-Louise Thomsen ist der Frage nachgegangen, wie weit verbreitet der Glaube an den Bösen Blick in den mesopotamischen Kulturen gewesen ist. Im Vergleich mit der großen Zahl an Beschwörungen gegen Übel und Krankheiten, welche von Dämonen und Hexerei ausgelöst werden, scheint für sie das Phänomen des Bösen Blicks in Mesopotamien nicht viel Aufmerksamkeit zu erfahren. Der Böse Blick, so Thomsen, gehört zu den alltäglichen Belästigungen, denen ein jeder im sozialen Miteinander ausgesetzt war. Er war allerdings nicht gefährlich genug, um seinen Platz unter den wichtigen Beschwörungen einzunehmen.⁸³

Eine weitere Erklärung für das spärliche Textmaterial könnte aber auch sein, dass es andere Wege gab mit diesem – scheinbar allgegenwärtigen – Phänomen umzugehen. Vielleicht durch das Tragen von prophylaktischen Amuletten und Symbolen – wie den Augensteinen – als Symbol eines göttlichen Schutzes, der den Träger gegen Neid und Missgunst seiner Mitmenschen abschirmte?

Gute archäologische Beispiele für das Tragen von Augensteinen finden sich im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr., analog zu den heutigen apotropäischen Maßnahmen. So kann der Schmuck aus der königlichen Gruft in Nimrud in solch einem Unheil abwehrend Zusammenhang gesehen werden. Rund 290 Anhänger, Ohringe, Armreifen, Ketten und Ringe wurden mit diesen besonderen Steinen verziert.⁸⁴ Desgleichen finden sich in Darstellungen Hinweise, dass Augensteine von der königlichen Familie getragen wurden. Die Zincirli-Stele Asarhaddons⁸⁵ zeigt den König mit einer Tiara bekleidet, die mit konzentrischen Objekten verziert ist sowie auch der Armreif und der

⁷⁹ Eine Bearbeitung beider Texte bei Geller 2003, 129–134 Appendix: BL 3.

⁸⁰ Geller 2003, 129–132, Z. 1–9.

⁸¹ Geller 2003, 125–128. Für die Diskussion des Bösen Blicks in Verbindung mit Neid und Paranoia s. Garrison/Arensberg 1976, 286–328.

⁸² Geller 2003, 127.

⁸³ Thomsen 1992, 28.

⁸⁴ Hussein/Suleiman 2000; Damerji 1999; Clayden 2009, 44.

⁸⁵ S. Börker-Klähn 1982, Nr. 219.

Kopfschmuck seiner Söhne Assurbanipal und Šamaš-šumu-ukīn. Aber nicht nur die königliche Familie trug Schmuckstücke mit Augensteinen, ebenso Götter und Tempel wurden mit ihnen ausgestattet, wie die Textquellen aufzeigen.⁸⁶

Für das 3. und frühe 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr. belegen Augensteine in Grabbeigaben, dass diese zumindest im Grab getragen wurden. Es ist aber davon auszugehen, dass es sich bei den Schmuckstücken um persönlichen Besitz des Verstorbenen gehandelt hat und sie auch im Leben den Besitzer zierten. Ebenfalls zu untersuchen wäre, ob sich unter den Schmucksteinen der in Stein gehauenen Bildnisse Akkad- und Ur III-zeitlicher Herrscher und deren Nachfolger Augensteine befunden haben.⁸⁷

8 Funktion und Auswertung

Die Funktion antiker Augensteine wird in der Forschung kontrovers diskutiert. So geht beispielsweise Robert Koldewey für die Augensteine aus Babylon davon aus, dass es sich um dekorative Elemente von Götterstatuen handelt und vergleicht diese „Onyxscheiben“ mit den konzentrischen Darstellungen auf dem Marduk-Siegel des Marduk-zākir-šumis, welche als Schmuck des göttlichen Gewandes und der Federkrone gedient haben könnten.⁸⁸ Für Elisabeth van Buren ist besonders der symbolische Charakter wichtig und sie verweist auf die Amulett-Funktion von Augensteinen.⁸⁹

Die Verwendung als Augeneinlagen von Statuen ist die am weitesten verbreitete Annahme in der Forschung und wird von zahlreichen Autoren unterstützt. So sind für Roger Moorey zum Beispiel Augensteine nicht gut geeignet, um sie als Schmuckstein auf Ketten zu fädeln, noch um sie an Gewänder zu nähen – für ihn handelt es sich erwiesenermaßen um Augeneinlagen von Statuen.⁹⁰ Ebenso spricht sich Eva Braun-Holzinger gegen eine Verwendung als Schmuckstein im Sinne von Kettengliedern aus, da nicht alle eine Durchbohrung aufweisen würden.⁹¹

Soweit bekannt, sind allerdings die meisten Augensteine perforiert, was eine Verwendung als Kettenglieder oder in anderen Schmuckobjekten wahrscheinlich macht und gegen einen Gebrauch als Augeneinlagen spricht. Die Auffindung unter anderen Schmuckperlen in Gräbern und einschlägige Textquellen deuten ebenfalls

⁸⁶ Ein Brief aus der Regierungszeit Asarhaddons belegt, dass ebenfalls die Tiara des Gottes Nabû mit Augensteinen verziert war, Parpola 1993, 31–32, Nr. 41.

⁸⁷ Die wenigen hierfür in Frage kommenden Statuen und Felsreliefs wurden erst kürzlich von Claudia Suter zusammengestellt und untersucht, s. Suter 2010, 325–327, 333–334, 336–337, figs. 5–7; 9a, 10–15.

⁸⁸ Koldewey 1911, 46–49, Nr. 1; Nr. 18 Abb. 74; 76; Koldewey 1990, 216.

⁸⁹ van Buren 1945, 53–57.

⁹⁰ Moorey 1994, 99; s. auch Clayden 2009, 39 mit weiteren Vertretern dieser These.

⁹¹ Braun-Holzinger 1991, 361, mit dem Verweis auf Lambert 1969, 70–71.

in diese Richtung. Der Text P 912 belegt beispielsweise eindeutig, dass die erwähnten Augensteine als Teil einer Perlenkomposition aufgefädelt einer Gottheit geweiht wurden. Für jene, die keine Perforierung aufweisen, sind weitere handwerkliche Verarbeitungstechniken denkbar, wie Fassungen und Einlagen, die keine Durchbohrung benötigen. Es soll hier nicht ausgeschlossen werden, dass Augensteine auch als Augeneinlagen Verwendung fanden, doch spricht gerade das Textmaterial und die *in situ* an Statuen gefundenen Augeneinlagen, die hauptsächlich aus unterschiedlichen Steinen zusammengesetzt wurden, gegen die primäre Nutzung als Einlage.

Die eingangs erwähnte Funktionsanalyse Claydens unterscheidet zwischen beschrifteten Steinen und solchen ohne Inschrift sowie deren Verwendung. So sind für Clayden die unbeschrifteten Augensteine vielfältig einsetzbar, als Dekorationselement oder auch als Amulette, während die mit Inschriften versehenen einem religiösen Zwecke dienten und hauptsächlich vom Herrscher verwendet wurden.⁹²

Für die materiale Präsenz von Geschriebenem, welche es als Thema dieser Konferenz zu untersuchen gilt, ist die Beziehung von Inschrift und Schriftträger besonders interessant. Welchen Einfluss übt die Inschrift auf den Inschriftenträger aus bzw. ist die Inschrift für die Funktion des schrifttragenden Artefaktes entscheidend? Für Clayden sind es besonders die Weihinschriften, die die Funktion der Steine bestimmen. Aber was unterscheidet generell beschriftete Schmucksteine und Perlen von unbeschrifteten?

Laut Braun-Holzinger lassen sich bei den Weihperlen des 3. und beginnenden 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. keine wesentliche Unterschiede in Material, Form und Herstellungsart feststellen – die Perlen mit Weihinschrift unterscheiden sich nicht sonderlich von unbeschrifteten Perlen, die beispielsweise zahlreich in Gräbern als Schmuckgebilde gefunden wurden. Daher geht sie davon aus, dass sich unter den geweihten Schmuckstücken viele private Kostbarkeiten befunden haben; eine Spezialanfertigung von Weihperlen schließt sie so gut wie aus.⁹³ Folglich ist es nicht die äußere Formgebung der Schmucksteine, die eine spezifische Funktion als Weihgabe festlegt. Es scheint mehr das persönliche Wertempfinden und die Intention des Weihenden zu sein, welches Objekt als Weihgabe in den Besitz der Gottheit übergeht.

Die Untersuchung des Trägermaterials, des gebänderten Steins, hat gezeigt, dass es die Substanz an sich ist – der aus fernen Ländern stammende Stein und die ihm zugeschriebene Kraft, potenziert durch die Form des Auges –, die den eigentlichen Wert erzeugt. Eine aufgebraute Weihinschrift verändert nicht die tiefere Bedeutung des Trägerobjekts, wie Clayden in seiner Studie so strikt unterscheidet. Sie dokumentiert vielmehr eine Transaktion, einen administrativen Vorgang. Die Bedeutung des Objektes an sich wird durch eine angebrachte Inschrift nicht überschrieben, eher

⁹² Clayden 2009, 55.

⁹³ Braun-Holzinger 1991, 361.

kommt eine Qualität hinzu. Für die Funktion bestimmend sind die visuellen und materiellen Eigenschaften des Steins.

Die uneinheitliche Oberflächenbeschaffenheit der teilweise perforierten Steine, die unterschiedlichen Fundkontexte sowie die Textfunde verweisen auf eine vielfältige Verwendung von Augensteinen, in religiösem wie profanem Kontext. Gemeinsam scheint ihnen zu sein, dass die Augen sichtbar angebracht waren – sowohl als Teil einer Kette, als auch als Dekoration von Tempelinventar, Kleidung, Götterbildern etc. Das Steinauge soll sehen und gesehen werden.

Die Funktion der Augensteine ist offenkundig mit einer Schutzmaßnahme eng verknüpft; eine beschützende Wirkung, die von der Kraft des gebänderten Steins herrührt. Ob sich diese apotropäische Maßnahme nun spezifisch gegen den Bösen Blick, den Neid und die Missgunst der Mitmenschen richtet oder generell jegliches Übel fernhalten soll, lässt sich mit dem derzeitigen Wissensstand nicht eindeutig feststellen. Was sich jedoch infolge der soziokulturellen Auswertung eindeutig sagen lässt, ist, dass ein Akteur, höchstwahrscheinlich ein göttlicher, durch das Medium des Steins sieht.

Abschließend soll der Blick auf heutige Schutzmechanismen gerichtet werden. Im Zeitalter der Videoüberwachung, die im öffentlichen Raum wie auch im häuslichen Umfeld als präventive Maßnahme allgegenwärtig ist, wird Eigentum permanent durch Überwachung gesichert. Überwachungskameras vermittelt Sicherheit dadurch, dass Geschehnisse aufgezeichnet bzw. gesehen werden, was die Aufklärung von Straftaten erleichtert und abschreckend auf potentielle Täter wirkt. Vielleicht lässt sich in diesem Zusammenhang ebenso die Hauptfunktion der antiken Augensteine begründen: Sichtbare, permanente Überwachung.

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Camille Lecompte

Observations on Diplomatics, Tablet Layout and Cultural Evolution of the Early Third Millennium: The Archaic Texts from Ur

1 Introduction

The Early Dynastic (ED) I–II period (ca. 2950–2650 BC), although crucial to our understanding of Mesopotamian history, is poorly documented, since no more than five hundred cuneiform tablets have been discovered as of yet.¹ The main textual corpus consists of 403 tablets uncovered by L. Woolley in the Royal Cemetery of Ur;² around 25 tablets from Uruk, later than the archaic documents and contemporary with the texts from Ur;³ further tablets which may have originated in Umma, Nippur, Kiš or be of unknown provenance;⁴ and finally, some of the so-called archaic *kudurru*: these latter may indeed be later than the Late Uruk period, to which they were dated by the authors of ELTS.⁵ ED I–II texts are characterized by the first clear occurrences of the Sumerian language and by a use of writing similar to that of the Fara scripts.⁶ On the other hand, these texts still display archaic features, such as the numerical system, which confirm that “they are intermediate in character between the collections of Jemdet Nasr and Fara”.⁷ Thus, to better estimate the cultural significance of the ED I–II documents, it is helpful to examine not only philological data, but also the “material” features, which are the main topic of this paper.

Diplomatics does not merely form an extraneous framework to writing. It is also a part of its essence, notably because any written sentence is embedded in a “material”

I would like to express my gratitude to Kamran V. Zand, Heidelberg, for his suggestions; I would also like to thank Alexander J. Edmonds, Tübingen, for having corrected the English of the present paper. Abbreviations follow the list given in the Reallexikon der Assyriologie as well as publication references available on the CDLI project; in order to make references to cuneiform texts from the ED I–II period easier, UET II and ATFU are used for Burrows 1935 and Lecompte 2013 respectively.

1 On the ED I–II period texts, see Viscato 2000, 13–18; Lecompte 2013, 1–28.

2 331 tablets were first edited by E. Burrows in UET II, with copies and an index of names (UET II, 1–266, 271–310, 312, 338–373). Later some remaining unpublished texts, consisting of 65 fragments (three without inscription), were published in ATFU.

3 Mainly published in Green 1982, Texts 1–13; see a preliminary catalogue in Lecompte 2013, 23, n. 79.

4 See Lecompte 2013, 23–24, notes 80–83; recently V. Bartash has published one ED I–II text in *CUSAS* 23, Text 144; further tablets are, according to the CDLI website, unpublished.

5 On the dating of these documents, see Steinkeller 2011, 214; Lecompte 2013, 23, n. 76.

6 Burrows 1935, 22–23; Englund 1998, 215; Krebernik 2002, 6.

7 Burrows 1935, 1.

and in the shape through which it is revealed (paper, book, lines, font, etc.). On the other hand, “material” shape and format determine or match the nature of a written sentence, which only exists as it appears: for instance, it is well known that in Mesopotamia royal inscriptions are generally written on different supports than administrative records. Furthermore, semiological studies, especially those of R. Barthes on this topic, refer to the distinction made by de Saussure between two components of the sign, the concept and its phonic form, *signifiant* and *signifié*,⁸ but in relation to the analysis of images and objects.⁹ This is why semiological studies focus on form and meaning, writing and image.¹⁰ This distinction matters for the question of the diplomatics of ED I–II documents, because the shapes of the cuneiform tablets, as well as the material arrangement of signs, far from being neutral, determine the conceptual order of the content, even for administrative texts. Such outer physical aspects are part of the meaning of a tablet and therefore reflect the stream of cultural tradition. According to Barthes, the *signifié* is more precisely identified with what a word refers to throughout the language, whereas the *signifiant* is a material feature of the sign. Barthes further argues that the *signifiant*, or “signifier”, is a mediator and therefore needs “matter”: “la substance du signifiant est toujours matérielle”.¹¹ Accordingly, the *signifiant* can be expressed through different kinds of signs: verbal, graphic, gestural, etc. The use of graphical signs displays material aspects of writing which are closely related to language, meaning, and concept, and is therefore a semiological system *per se*.¹²

Against this backdrop, the present study will stress two aspects of the implications of “material” features throughout the ED I–II tablets which are highly relevant in underlining their cultural evolution during the early third millennium. Firstly, tablet format and shape from the Late Uruk period to the time of the Fara texts underwent important changes. Texts from Ur, which are not well standardized, show intermediate features, though the column disposition is organized rather similarly to the Fara conventions. On the other hand, since systematic palaeographical studies should be devoted to the texts from Ur, which would exceed the scope of the present article, only the relation between the set of (graphical) signs and the squares (or cases)/lines within which they are written will be highlighted here. This therefore concerns the order of signs in clusters. In the present article, the tablets will be turned 90° counter-clockwise from their original reading and writing direction, in order to conform to conventional standards within Assyriology.

⁸ Saussure 1995, 99–103.

⁹ See for instance Barthes 1964.

¹⁰ Barthes 1970, 214–223.

¹¹ Barthes 1964, 109.

¹² The significance of tablet shape as well as of sign order in the cuneiform texts matches the observation of Barthes 1970, 214, on the aims of semiological studies: “la sémiologie est une science des formes puisqu’elle étudie des significations indépendamment de leur contenu”.

2 Tablet Shape and Format from the Late Uruk to the Fara Period

2.1 ED I–II Texts

2.1.1 Shape of the Tablets

In spite of their fragmentary state, the archaic texts from Ur were described as follows by E. Burrows:

The great majority of the tablets (to abstract from labels and the like) are oblong, with length [i.e., top to bottom of copies] greater than breadth, straight or oblong, slightly rounded sides, and but slightly rounded corners¹³

Examples of the aforementioned typical oblong format are: ATFU 56 (Ill. A.5), with straight sides and slightly rounded corners, and UET II, 61 (Ill. A.3) and 70, which display slightly curved sides. Burrows also noticed many exceptions, such as circular tablets, tablets with equal length and breadth, etc. Though most of the tablets have an oblong format, some of them can be cushion-like in form, such as ATFU 2 or UET II, 55 (Ill. A.1). R. K. Englund also observed that ED I–II tablets were “clumsily” formed,¹⁴ since many texts from Ur present irregular sides, for instance UET II, 55 (Ill. A.1), whereas contemporary tablets from Uruk seem (at least according to the available copies) to be well executed. However, this aspect of the tablets from Ur is barely noticeable in Burrows’ copies, and could also be due to the fragmentary state of preservation of this material. Tablets which were wholly preserved, however, seem to be generally well formed, such as UET II, 177 (Ill. A.4) or ATFU 54.

As regards tablet surface, Burrows makes the following observation:

About 70 per cent. of the relatively complete tablets have obverse flat and reverse convex, or obverse slightly convex and reverse more convex; about 20 per cent. are nearly equally convex on both sides (occasionally nearly flat on both sides); about 10 per cent. are more convex on the obverse and less so, or flat, on reverse¹⁵

The surface of the majority of the tablets can easily be seen in ATFU 57 and UET II, 177 (Ill. A.6 and 4), the former having a flat obverse and convex reverse, the latter a slightly convex obverse and more convex reverse. UET II, 70 seems to illustrate the

¹³ Burrows 1935, 4.

¹⁴ Englund 1998, 215.

¹⁵ Burrows 1935, 4.

kind of tablets with both obverse and reverse convex, while ATFU 64 is an example of the last category (convex obverse and flat reverse). According to the photographs available, the situation seems to be the same for those of Uruk and for the tablets without provenance.

2.1.2 Columniation and Internal Organization

According to Burrows, the internal organization can be described as follows:

Columns are divided into cases in the usual way [...] The asymmetrical subdivisions that characterize the JN tablets do not occur. The affinity is here with Fara and later texts [...] The reverse is most often uninscribed. When it is inscribed the tablet is turned over on the bottom edge, as at Fara; never laterally, as sometimes at JN. The right column of the obverse may run over on the reverse [...]¹⁶

There are a few examples of tablets from Ur where the reverses are uninscribed but they have a separation line drawn beforehand by the scribe (see for instance ATFU 18). ED I–II tablets from Uruk have similarly uninscribed reverses. In other cases, such as UET II, 252 and ATFU 57 (Ill. A.2 and 6), the last column of the obverse continues on the reverse and is indeed its first column.

As regards disposition of columns, however, the situation is more problematic than Burrows' description would suggest. On the one hand, it is noticeable that the format typical of archaic tablets from Uruk and Jemdet Nasr, with their multiple entries and complex subdivision, is not anymore in use. On the other hand, one also has to observe that, unlike the Fara tablets, ED I–II texts, at least those from Ur, are not well standardized and show an irregular use of columniation, an indication that the scribes did not follow a strict protocol. Firstly, the lines dividing the cases into columns are regularly clumsily shaped and rarely as well-drawn as they are in many Fara or Abū Šalābīḥ tablets. Secondly, very few tablets from Ur are similar to the big texts from the ED IIIa period, with the exception of UET II, 112, which has 6 columns, each containing more than 20 lines. This disposition of columns and lines shows a more irregular pattern than during the ED IIIa period: in some tablets, such as UET II, 201, ATFU 55 (Ill. A.8), and ATFU 64, one side contains two columns, the other only one row of lines running over its whole surface, similar to the format of later periods, for instance Sargonic; likewise, some tablets only have one row of lines on one side (UET II, 82, 115 and 122). Columniation generally runs from left to right on the obverse and from right to left on the reverse. The way columns succeed one another is in some cases peculiar: for instance, on the obverse of UET II, 177 (Ill. A.4), there is a gap between the second and third columns, and the second column is inscribed on only

¹⁶ Burrows 1935, 4.

half of its height, while the third column begins with an entry which seems to introduce a different kind of ware (LA_2 NINDA₂ × ŠE). In UET II, 104, the obverse consists of three columns stopping at half of its height, and the last line has the sign APIN, referring to land plots to plough (uru₄); such disposition is consistent with the format of Late Uruk as well as Fara texts. In UET II, 98, there is also a gap between the first and third columns of the obverse, and the second column is left blank and without any case/square, as on the reverse of the ED III tablets. In other tablets, columns already drawn are left uninscribed, such as UET II, 20 and 27, but in the latter, the columns of the reverse all are inscribed; only the obverse contains two columns without inscription. The riddle of why scribes drew on tablets which were obviously too big cannot be solved. However, it should be observed that in ATFU 33 (III. A.7), signs in the right column have been erased, as if the scribe intended to reuse it.

Unlike some Late Uruk tablets, such as MSVO 1, 2–3, no ED I–II text shows a format consisting of lines running from right to left if turned 90° clockwise and divided into cases/squares in which signs were written “vertically”. There does not seem to be any evidence for the direction of writing or reading tablets and signs in the archaic tablets from Ur,¹⁷ although one may assume that this direction was indeed the same as during the third millennium and earlier periods.¹⁸

2.1.3 Clauses, Subscripts, Totals and Marks

As Burrows noted,¹⁹ totals are expressed only by the term gu₂-an-še₃, never šu-niĝen₂, and are only found in a few tablets, which mostly deal with field surfaces. Totals are also not explicitly written, but merely consist of an amount, such as in ATFU 62, which summarizes the number of men, designated as lu₂-RU, sent to a shrine called e₂-nun gal.

¹⁷ H. J. Nissen in Damerow/Englund/Nissen 1993, 120, notices that *Winkelhaken* signs occur later than the Fara period and indicate a change in the writing orientation; the same may be said for the ED I–II documents.

¹⁸ Krebernik 1998, 274, writes about the tablets from the Fara period: “Bekanntlich sind die Keilschriftzeichen in ihrer uns vertrauten Form gegenüber der ursprünglichen, an den Bildinhalten erkennbaren Stellung um 90 Grad nach links gekippt, und aus ursprünglich waagrecht nach links verlaufenden Fächern sind Zeilen senkrechter Kolonnen geworden”. The designs on the tablets from Fara show, according to the same scholar, that the reading of these tablets was determined according to the vertical orientation of the signs. See also Edzard 1976–1980, 596. An explanation for the change in writing orientation was also given by Falkenstein 1936, 9–11, who assumed that tablets were first held in the palm of the left hand at an angle of approximately 45° in relation to the scribe. Compare with Deimel’s interpretation, 1922, 12–3. Zand 2008, 10.

¹⁹ Burrows 1935, 5.

Table 1: Expression gu_2 -an-še₃ in the archaic texts from Ur.

Fields	Other
UET II, 97 – UET II, 113D – UET II, 122 – UET II, 127 – UET II, 163 – UET II, 164 – UET II, 184 – UET II, 356 – UET II, 359 – UET II, 365 – UET II, 371 (?)	UET II, 21. Flax (gu)? – UET II, 85. Barley, Vessel – UET II, 166. bread? – UET II, 297. ?

Another interesting feature is the presence of some sets of signs, which are set apart from the rest of the text and seem to correspond to clauses supposedly intended to summarize the content of the tablet or to refer to the administrator responsible for it. Such names and terms are generally isolated within a column and are not written inside a case, but seemingly arranged at random within the tablet. These can be described as subscripts.²⁰

Clauses summarizing content are related either to food rations concerning beer, bread and barley, or to fields, although the expression gid_2 -a, “measured”,²¹ is generally written in the “standard” cases and lines, apart from UET II, 184.²² Moreover, since several personal and professional names are attested, such clauses do not point to the existence of an administrative office, but rather refer to the responsibility of a few administrators. In this respect, the attestation in UET II, 162 of a possible lugal may not be evidence for the existence of a kingship in the city of Ur, since there is no further example of an office controlled by a king.²³ In UET II, 281, the separated clause, which refers to a number of cakes given to the engiz/Me-en-gi,²⁴ is merely a supplementary item in this administrative record which should have been written in the center of the tablet.²⁵

²⁰ See Sallaberger 2010, 33–34.

²¹ Jagersma 2010, 19. According to Burrows 1935, 22, this expression should be interpreted as: a- gid_2 but, with respect to the scarcity of attestations of the prefix -a, it may indeed consist of the verb gid_2 and the nominalizing suffix -a., for the latter writing gid_2 -da.

²² See UET II, 104. R0106 (note, however, that the expression is somewhat isolated and separated); UET II, 111. 00102; UET II, 122. 00102; UET II, 187. 00101.

²³ Compare with Sallaberger 2010, 33: “Text 162 also contains a clause of še lugal sanga, grain of king and administrator”. On the existence of kingship in the archaic texts from Ur, see also Andersson 2012, 245–247 and Lecompte 2013, 21–22.

²⁴ Those foodstuffs might be related to the profession of engiz, “cook”.

²⁵ Note also that the reverse of the lexical text UET II, 264, contains a colophon to be read Aya₂-engur-si, as well as the sign MUŠ₃ and another unidentified sign, all set freely on the tablet (i.e., not enclosed in cases). This is consistent with the Late Uruk lexical texts.

Table 2: Isolated clauses in the archaic texts from Ur^a.

Content	Administrator/Responsible
UET II, 55. Obv. II. ninda gi ₄	UET II, 34. Rs. PA-EREN ₂ .X(KiŠ).KI
UET II, 61. Rs. kaš gi ₄	UET II, 37. Rs. S. 379(EGIR/IB ₂ A) AN x
UET II, 86. Obv. II. še+ninda	UET II, 108. Rs. II. kišgal a-ša ₃ GAN ₂
UET II, 95. Obv. II. še gu ₇ eš ₃	UET II, 162. Rs. I. lugal SAĜĜA(šid?) še
UET II, 127. Rs. I. GAN ₂ Nanna _x	UET II, 170. Obv. III. Lugal-PA-SU ₁₃ +SIKIL
UET II, 177. Rs. II. GIR! DU ₃	UET II, 176. Rs. GAL ([lug]al?)
UET II, 184. Obv. III. gid ₂ -a	UET II, 184. Obv. II. GAN ₂ EN
Rs. 2. [...] APIN	UET II, 226. Rs. I. NU ŠU ^c
UET II, 209. Rs. X(ĜIRI ₃ ?)	UET II, 262. Rs. namešda
UET II, 226. Obv. II GAN ₂	UET II, 281. Rs. 2N ₁ gug ₂ engiz
Rs. I. NU ŠU (PN)	UET II, 339. Obv. I. ba[h̄ar ₄ ?]
UET II, 252. Rs. igi-nim ŠA ₃	UET II, 343. Obv. II. 3'. gal-sukkal A ZA ₃
UET II, 364. Rs. NU S. 277 ^b	UET II, 353. Obv. II. PAP NAM ₂ ŠA ₃ (?)
ATFU 37. Rs. I?	ATFU 17. Obv. II. DU[MU]? ^d
ATFU 61. Rs. IV. kas ₄	

Notes: **a** Sallaberger 2010, 34, considers the reference to a nunnuzi priestess in UET II, 348 to be a subscript, although from our point of view it is merely integrated into the standard columniation.

b This sign probably refers to a kind of fish and is similar to DIM₃. **c** NU ŠU can surely be identified as a personal name because of its attestation in UET II, 226. Obv. IV. 1. **d** In my edition of this text, this possible script was merely considered to be an erasure.

Lastly, a few ED I–II tablets contain marks such as those recently analysed by J. Dahl for the Proto-Elamite corpus.²⁶ In contrast with those tablets, ED I–II non-writing marks are scantily attested and never occur in more than one tablet.²⁷ We can distinguish the following kinds of marks and present here an exhaustive list of those marks:²⁸

- non-writing marks on inscribed tablets: UET II, 51, star-like mark; UET II, 53, mark similar to the sign ŠU; UET II, 55 (III. A.1), complex drawing; UET II, 99 geometric shape; UET II, 105, drawing consisting of a circle and a triangle; UET II, 253, complex geometric shape; UET II, 264, drawing on the reverse (?);²⁹ UET II, 299,

²⁶ Dahl 2012.

²⁷ Non-writing marks in Ur are therefore unlikely to refer to any archival signs drawn to distinguish offices or administrators. Compare with the practice in Proto-Elamite tablets, Dahl 2012, 8–9. They are, on the other hand, not elaborated enough to be compared with the drawings in the texts from Fara and Abū Šalābiḥ, though Dahl 2012, 8, suggests that both kinds of marks closely resemble one another. On the designs in the ED IIIa tablets, see Biggs 1974, 31; Mander 1995, 18, clearly separates the marks observable in the Fara tablets, which he suggests are tied with the colophons, from the earlier engravings.

²⁸ For a preliminary list, see Dahl 2012, 8.

²⁹ Though mentioned by Dahl 2012, 8, this tablet may not contain a mark, but just be damaged.

scratching on the reverse (?);³⁰ UET II, 312 geometric mark similar to a building plan (?)³¹

- in some uninscribed tablets, we find only drawn markings: UET II, 157, mark similar to the sign UB; UET II, 249, 250 and ATFU 36,³² same complex mark; UET II, 263, scratchings;³³ UET II, 292–293, scratchings, similar to a “coin” or a sign;³⁴ UET II, 311, 313–315 (sealings), plain drawings partly similar to signs.³⁵

2.2 Uruk Texts

In comparison with the ED I–II tablets, those from the Late Uruk period, especially from level III of the Eanna sector, as well as those from Jemdet Nasr, display some common features. Archaic tablets are also frequently oblong, with greater length than breadth. Smaller tablets resemble pillows in a manner similar to the archaic texts from Ur.³⁶ However, in contrast to these, Jemdet Nasr texts generally have a convex obverse and a flat reverse, even though there is no systematic rule regarding the repartition of their surface.³⁷ As Falkenstein noticed, on tablets from the Uruk IV level both sides are slightly rounded;³⁸ Uruk III tablets also possess equally convex obverse and reverse sides.³⁹ On the other hand, the organization of columns undergoes an important change during the Late Uruk period: while Uruk IV texts regularly consist of plain cushion-like tablets without any columniation, those of the Uruk III period display the use of more complex formats, especially characterized by the subdivision of columns and squares.⁴⁰ Since the writing was oriented “vertically” and turned 90°

³⁰ Though included by Dahl 2012, 8 in the tablets containing a mark, it may again be merely a damaged trace.

³¹ It is questionable whether in UET II, 290, the mark similar to a modern comma must be identified with BAR.

³² See the commentary to this “tablet” with the similar forms attested during the Uruk period.

³³ Burrows 1935, 53.

³⁴ Burrows 1935, 54: “Irregular piece with sign (?) repeated. Sealing?”.

³⁵ Burrows 1935, 55 considers those drawings to be “scratched markings”, “scratched signs”. The signs DU, MUNU₄ and SAL can be identified in UET II, 311, 314 and 315. The sign in UET II, 313 is uncertain. See also UE III, Drawings 50–119, Plates 3–6 and the commentaries by Legrain.

³⁶ For an overview on tablet format during the Uruk period, see Falkenstein 1936, 7–8, 11–12.

³⁷ Langdon 1928, III; Falkenstein 1936, 8.

³⁸ Falkenstein 1936, 7: “Beide Seiten dieser sehr oft nur einseitig beschriebenen Stücke sind in gleicher Weise leicht gewölbt”. Falkenstein also notes two exceptions to this format.

³⁹ Falkenstein 1936, 8: “Gewöhnlich sind beide Seiten gleichmäßig gewölbt”.

⁴⁰ Falkenstein 1936, 7 and 11: “Die kleinen rechteckigen und ovalen Tontafeln der Schicht IV weisen in der Regel keine Unterteilung auf. [...] Die umfangreicheren Texte der Schicht IV und der späteren Zeiten zerlegen die Schreibfläche durch senkrechte Striche, die die einzelnen Fächer zu Kolonnen vereinigen”. Englund 1998, 57, on the Uruk IV tablets: “Only the obverse of these texts is inscribed,

clockwise in comparison with the presentation of modern copies and photographs, scribes drew the signs from right to left and filled each case from top to bottom in what is “horizontal” to us. Accordingly, some tablets from Jemdet Nasr, such as MSVO 1, 2–3, display “horizontal” rows of lines divided into squares when turned 90° counter-clockwise from their original orientation instead of columns running from top to bottom down the tablet. This feature may explain why, in some tablets from Ur, an arbitrary arrangement of lines and columns, with an alternation between columns and lines, can be found.

Other features of the Late Uruk texts seem to match the organization of tablets found in Ur:

1. The reverse is often left uninscribed, especially in lexical lists.
2. Sets of signs in the last clauses may be isolated or may not stand in a column, similarly to the subscripts and separated clauses in ED I–II texts, such as the reverse of MSVO 1, 13 and of ATU 5, W5233b. In other tablets, sets of signs are written in a column but are not divided into the usual lines and seem more freely arranged, like in ATU 5, W9168h+, and MSVO 1, 84. All of these examples show the use of a so-called “subscript” which survived during the ED I–II period.

2.3 ED IIIa Period

The oblong format with rounded sides typical of the archaic documents from Ur is generally no longer in use, having been replaced by small cushion-like tablets and larger rectangular texts, though there are examples of oblong texts with straight or rounded sides.⁴¹ As observed by Falkenstein, tablet dimensions increase during the ED IIIa period.⁴² Tablets are generally inscribed on both sides, unlike the archaic documents from Ur. On the other hand, surfaces during the Fara period display more affinity with the aforementioned texts: while in bigger tablets obverse and reverse are often slightly convex, some smaller documents present a flat obverse and a convex

and only with one entry (an entry will usually consist of either a numerical notation, or one or a combination of ideographic signs, or most frequently, both)”. For a description on the Uruk III period texts, see Englund 1998, 61, and the use of “multiple entries”.

41 Deimel 1924, 2–4, on the administrative tablets: “Der äusseren Form nach sind die meisten dieser Wirtschaftstexte quadratisch mit abgerundeten Ecken, also genau wie die der Urukagina Zeit. Bei diesen Fara-Tafeln sind aber Vs und Rs schwach gewölbt; sie sind daher in der Mitte viel dünner, als die Urukagina-Tafeln; die Ränder laufen alle spitzig zu, sind also im Gegensatz zu den letzteren unbeschreibbar”. Deimel 1923, 13; Krebernik 1998, 273. Zand 2009, 8–9 describes UD-GAL-NUN texts as having in Fara “ein rechteckiges Format mit annähernd gleicher Höhe und Breite”; the same is true for Abū Ṣalābīḥ manuscripts. See Biggs 1974, 22 and 30. The ED IIIa oblong tablets are more ovoid than those from the ED I–II period.

42 Falkenstein 1936, 8.

reverse, a format which is also broadly adopted later in Presargonic Lagaš/Ġirsu documents.⁴³ Columniation is more strictly organized and reliably consists of columns divided into squares: as far as we know, there is no more alternation between lines and columns. Gaps between columns are not arbitrarily arranged, as may be noted in the documents from Ur. A total is designated as šu-niġen_2 and $\text{gu}_2\text{-an-}\check{\text{še}}_3$, the latter corresponding to the final sum, an inheritance of the administrative expressions of the previous period. The previously typical subscripts and freely arranged sets of signs referring to the administrator or to the general content of the texts are now seemingly absent. Only the colophons of the literary and lexical texts can be inscribed in a separate space, apart from the rest of the standard columniation.⁴⁴

2.4 The Position of the Archaic Texts from Ur

As Burrows has already noted,⁴⁵ archaic texts from Ur are intermediate in nature.⁴⁶ Features common with Late Uruk/Jemdet Nasr tablets include:

- an oblong shape, half rounded sides, larger tablets having a rectangular format.
- a reverse generally left uninscribed.
- the presence of clauses and subscripts freely disposed apart from or into the columns.
- tablets from Ur displaying rows of lines inconsistent with the usual columns; this clearly comes from the horizontal lines subdivided into columns observable in a few of the Jemdet Nasr texts.

On the other hand, the ED I–II texts are forerunners to the ED III tablets in regard to the following aspects:

- surface, with a rather flat obverse and convex reverse.
- a lack of subdivision of cases similar to the Late Uruk period.
- total expressed as $\text{gu}_2\text{-an-}\check{\text{še}}_3$.

Other features are very specific to the ED I–II period, such as the clumsy form of many tablets and the random disposition of columns.

⁴³ Deimel 1924, 3; Deimel 1922, 3.

⁴⁴ Deimel 1923, 2; Biggs 1974, 33–34.

⁴⁵ Burrows 1935, 6: “There is thus evidence of many kinds that the present collection of documents is intermediate between those of JN [Jemdet Nasr] and F[ara]”.

⁴⁶ Burrows 1935, 4–5.

3 Material Features of Writing: Sign Clusters

Burrows already made important palaeographical observations on ED I–II tablets: namely, “a large proportion of signs are more primitive than those of Fara” and about one-fifth of the signs have “partially rounded forms where F[ara] already has the angular”.⁴⁷ However, we can also observe a slight tendency toward more angular forms and broader signs than during the Late Uruk period, which might be connected to the stylus used at that time.⁴⁸ Although many tablets are so damaged that the original signs may have been deformed, there are examples of very thin signs similar to those of Late Uruk texts, such as in ATFU 3. An important aspect which will be stressed here is the order of signs, which was given scant attention by Burrows.

3.1 Sign Clusters in the Archaic Texts from Ur⁴⁹

Although those texts are the first to use mainly phonetic values of signs to write (Sumerian) personal names,⁵⁰ the order of sign clusters does not correspond to the pronunciation of such names but seems to be largely arranged at random.⁵¹ It is, however, possible to notice some rules which are related to the use of space within the case or to the presence of numerical signs. As a matter of fact, numerals are consistently clustered in the left edge of the case, where they may follow each other, either horizontally or vertically. The writing of personal names (PNs) is the most important evidence for sign disposition, because very few sentences are written in those tablets, which refer mainly to persons and professions. However, a major difficulty for such a study comes from the fact that many PNs are attested in only one text each.

1. Utu-ur-saĝ is attested in three texts; in UET II, 128 and ATFU 55, it is to be found as follows: numerals Utu-ur/-saĝ. In UET II, 340, this PN is written on a line following the mention of the object: 00101. 2N₁ NINDA₂ × ŠIM 0102. Utu-saĝ:ur. The placement of the signs here depends upon the presence of numerals: in the first

⁴⁷ Burrows 1935, 3: “[wedges] seem to be generally less broad than those of Fara [...] and not unlike those of JN script”. Compare with the observations of H. J. Nissen in Damerow/Englund/Nissen 1993, 119, who contends that the “transition from curvilinear to real cuneiform [...] is completed by the time of the archaic texts from Ur”. See also Edzard 1976–1980, 546.

⁴⁸ Lecompte 2013, 26.

⁴⁹ See Ill. B, for the writing of personal names.

⁵⁰ Englund 1998, 215: “this period is characterized by the earliest apparently multivalent use of proto-cuneiform to write Sumerian words in personal names”. See the observations of Burrows 1935, 22–23; Krebernik 2002, 4, 6–7; Zand 2008, 15.

⁵¹ This feature of sign clusters was considered in studies which do not specifically deal with the archaic texts from Ur. See Edzard 1976–1980, 566; Zand 2008, 10–11.

- two attestations, the scribe uses the available space to the right of the numerals and leaves saĝ below; UTU stands in the first position.
2. Nanna_x-ur-saĝ is attested several times, but the signs are written at random; in most of the tablets, however, we find the following sign cluster: numerals Nanna_x/-saĝ:ur or ur-saĝ, with Nanna_x just below numerals or on their right.⁵² This is far from being the rule: UET II, 42 and 53 and ATFU 60. ur:/Nanna_x:saĝ; ATFU 64. [sa]ĝ:ur-Nanna_x.⁵³
 3. Ur-saĝ, which may be a shortened form of one of the two previous PNs, is also written as Ur-saĝ or saĝ:ur, generally depending on the presence of numerals.⁵⁴
 4. Names with the verb -si: Some personal names are written in the same manner, with no change in sign order: En-abzu-si is three times attested as: abzu-si:en, Aya₂-abzu-si four times as: si:abzu-aya₂.⁵⁵ Ama-e₂-si shows an irregular sign order: si:ama-e₂, e₂:ama:si, ama-e₂-si; the sign order depends upon neither the square nor the presence of numerals, and seems to be randomly arranged.⁵⁶ Ama-e₂-nun-si, which could be the same as Ama-e₂-si, is attested five times in a similar sign order, as follows: numeral si:ama- or Ama:si-e₂-nun, with the verb -si either below the numerals or to the right of them, close to the term ama; e₂ and nun are seemingly not separated, nun being drawn below e₂.⁵⁷
 5. Example of long names: Ša₃-ta-nu-e₃ is written with several sign orders which seem to be randomly disposed.⁵⁸

⁵² UET II, 55, 66, 87, 181 and 231, see also UET II, 186 and 253, where Nanna_x-ur-saĝ is quoted without numeral before.

⁵³ The two first occurrences are not preceded by any numeral.

⁵⁴ The first writing occurs generally in cases with numerals, e.g. UET II, 39, 168, 367 and ATFU 65; the latter is especially to be found in cases without numerals, such as UET II, 170 (?), 304, ATFU 60 and 61 (with the exception of UET II, 94).

⁵⁵ The former is attested in: UET II, 168. 00109'. 1N₁₄ abzu-/si:en. UET II, 259. 00107. abzu-si:en. ATFU 55. 00203. 1N₁₄ 2N₁ abzu-si:en. The latter in: UET II, 127. 00206. si:abzu:aya₂. UET II, 193C. 00103'. [...] si:abzu:aya₂. UET II, 226. 00107. 2N₁ (=2 iku) si:abzu:aya₂. ATFU 50. R0101. si:abzu:aya₂. Transliterations are presented according to the sign order and to their placement within the cases.

⁵⁶ This personal name is attested in the following texts (correct the index of Burrows 1935, 28). UET II, 62. 00207. 1N₁ e₂:ama-/si. UET II, 226. 00302. 1N₁₄ 3N₁ ama-/si:e₂. UET II, 255. 00205'. 1N₁ si:e₂:ama. UET II, 259. 00202. si:ama-/e₂. UET II, 354. 00202. 3N₁ si: 'ama^l-/e₂. ATFU 57. R0103. 2N₁ si:ama-/e₂. ATFU 18. 00202'. 1N₁ maš₂ Ama-/e₂-/si.

⁵⁷ See UET II, 61. 00103. 4N₁₄ si:/ama-/e₂-nun!; though this occurrence was considered by E. Burrows to be Ama-e₂-si (PN 98), the sign NUN seems to be drawn below E₂, but without its usual vertical strokes and similar to BAR. UET II, 161. 00102. 1N₂₂ (= 1 eše₃) Ama:/si-e₂-nun, in which SI stands below the numeral. UET II, 199. 00203. 1N₁ si:ama-e₂-nun. UET II, 208. 00103. 2N₁₄ 3N₁ (= 2 bur₃ 3 iku) Ama:/si-e₂-nun, with the same disposition as in UET II, 161. ATFU 60. 00303. 2N₁ si:ama-/e₂-nun.

⁵⁸ UET II, 19. 00102'. nu-e₃:ša₃-ta. UET II, 104. 00202. 2N₂₂ 1N₁ (= 2 eše₃ 1 iku) ša₃:/ta-/UD-nu-DU, with the sign ŠA₃ to the right of the numerals, TA below them and both signs UD and DU of the logogram E₃ being separated, as is usual in archaic texts from Ur. UET II, 128. 00407. 1N₁₄ (= 1 bur₃) nu-e₃:ša₃:/ta. 00409 (edge). ta:ša₃-nu-e₃. UET II, 143. 00302. [xN_x] [t]a:ša₃-[UD].DU:nu. UET II, 147. 00301. 1N₁

6. Example of long names, names with the element *mes-*: *Mes-lu₂-nu-ḫuḡ* is also randomly written: UET II, 62. 00103. 1N₁ *lu₂:mes:ḫuḡ:nu*. ATFU 57. 00302'. *ḫuḡ¹:mes:lu₂:nu*. *Mes-ki-nu-zu* is found as *Mes-ki-nu-zu* in two texts⁵⁹ and as *zu:mes-ki-nu* in one other tablet;⁶⁰ the sign set of this name therefore seems rather to be arranged according to its reading.
7. Example of long names, *Lugal-nam-tar-PA.SU₁₃+SIKIL*: sign order is also random, but *NAM* and *TAR* are never separated.⁶¹ When a personal name consists of more than three signs, the order of these is random.
8. Names with a reduplicated sign. In names such as *Igi-gi-gi*,⁶² *Na-zi-zi*,⁶³ *ĜA₂-za₇-za₇*,⁶⁴ and *Ziz₂-sul-sul* (transliteration uncertain),⁶⁵ the last two signs follow each other, either horizontally or vertically, and are not separated.
9. Element *ul₄-gal*. At least 12 personal names consist of the element *ul₄-gal*, either “great, noble, great fear” or “big acacia”.⁶⁶ They are generally to be found as: *X-gal:ul₄*,⁶⁷ with *X* being a personal element like *aya₂*, “father”, *ama*, “mother”, *lugal*...⁶⁸ *Ama-ul₄-gal*, though written at random, is in almost all occurrences characterized by the sign set *gal:ama*, followed or preceded by *UL₄*.⁶⁹ *Aya₂-ul₄-gal*: the sign order is more random, but it is noticeable that its writing generally consists of the association *ul₄:aya₂*, with *gal* below, to the left or separated, which occurs in six of eight attestations.⁷⁰

nu:ša₃:e₃:ta. UET II, 162. 00311. *e₃:nu:ša₃:ta*. UET II, 182A. 00202'. 3(?)N₁₉ *e₃:ša₃:nu:ta*.

⁵⁹ UET II, 128. 00303'. 1N₂₂ 3N₁ (= 1 *eše₃* 3 *iku*) *Mes-ki-nu-zu*. ATFU 64. 00204'. 1N₁₄ 5N₁ *Mes-/ki-nu-zu*.

⁶⁰ UET II, 252. 00112. 2N₁ *zu:mes-ki-nu*. This disposition cannot be explained by the format of the square, nor by the presence of numerals.

⁶¹ UET II, 101. 00102. *Lugal-nam:/PA.SU₁₃+SIKIL:tar*, with *NAM* being above *TAR*. UET II, 101. 00106. 2N₁ *Lugal:/PA.SU₁₃+SIKIL:/tar:nam*. UET II, 224. 00104. *Lugal-/tar:nam-/PA.SU₁₃+SIKIL*. UET II, 224. R0103'. *Lugal:/PA.SU₁₃+SIKIL:/tar:nam*. ATFU 46. 00101'. *Lugal:/PA.SU₁₃+SIKIL:/tar:nam*. In the last two cases, *NAM* and *TAR* follow each other horizontally.

⁶² ATFU 2. R0103. ATFU 60. 00402.

⁶³ PN 543 in UET II; see references given by Burrows 1935.

⁶⁴ PN 308, not written with the sign *ZA* but with *NUNUZ*. See the references given by Burrows 1935.

⁶⁵ The sign *AŠ₂* can be placed before or after *sul-sul* with no change in meaning, see UET II, 240, 247 and ATFU 61.

⁶⁶ For literature on the reading of *UL₄*, which can be read *ad₂*, see Lecompte 2013, 66.

⁶⁷ See for instance the writing of the personal names *Bi₁x(NE.PAP.S.377)-ul₄-gal*, PN 325 and *Lugal-ul₄-gal*, PN 471, which feature the sign combination *gal:ul₄*.

⁶⁸ E. Burrows considers whether UET II, 152. 00102'. 2N₁₄ 1N₂₂ *Aya₂-ul₄-gal GEN₇*, refers to *Aya₂-ul₄-gal-gen₇*, “the father is like a big acacia”, PN 15, but one wonders whether *GEN₇* may not mention the profession *šidim*.

⁶⁹ The only exception to this writing is UET II, 85. 00202. *gal:ul₄¹:ama*. The association *gal:ama* is attested in all of the other occurrences of this PN, see Burrows 1935, 29 and ATFU 166 for the 9 other references.

⁷⁰ UET II, 24. 00201; UET II, 27. 00110 and 00204; UET II, 84. 00201'; UET II, 152. 00102, in which

10. Other names consisting of two signs. As can be predicted, sign order is also random in many cases: Amar-ib (shortened form of Amar-^dIb) is generally written ib:amar. However, there are also examples of Amar-ib. Ama-alan is generally written as follows: ama with alan just below it in five texts,⁷¹ or in an horizontal direction alan:ama⁷² in three occurrences; only in UET II, 363. 00104. 3N₁ alan:/am[a], is the order otherwise. The disposition of the signs can be partially predicted: the first order consistently occurs when numerals are present, leaving a narrow space right on the edge of the case, which is just enough for the sign AMA; the sign ALAN must therefore be placed below it. The second order occurs only when the case is large enough to contain numerals as well as the signs ALAN and AMA: the scribe thus always chooses to put ALAN to the right of the numerals. The third order can be explained through the broad space to the right of the numerals, in which the sign ALAN can fit, in contrast to the first disposition. Ib-mud is randomly written either ib-mud or mud:ib, seemingly without any predictable reason.

Table 3: Sign order in personal names in the archaic texts from Ur.

Names	“Correct order”	Other fixed or preferred order	Random
Utu-ur-saĝ	Utu-ur-saĝ		Utu-saĝ:ur
Nanna _x -ur-saĝ	Nanna _x -ur-saĝ	Nanna _x -saĝ:ur	ur-Nanna _x :saĝ saĝ:ur:Nanna _x
Ur-saĝ	Ur-saĝ	saĝ:ur	
En-abszu-si		abzu-si:en	
Aya ₂ -abzu-si		si:abzu-aya ₂	
Ama-e ₂ -si	Ama-e ₂ -si		si:ama-e ₂ e ₂ :ama:si
Ama-e ₂ -nun-si		si:ama-e ₂ -nun Ama:si-e ₂ -nun	
Ša ₃ -ta-nu-e ₃			nu:ša ₃ -ta:e ₃ ta:ša ₃ -nu-e ₃ nu-e ₃ :ša ₃ -ta
Mes-lu ₂ -nu-ĥuĝ			lu ₂ :mes:ĥuĝ:nu ĥuĝ:mes:lu ₂ :nu

Aya₂-ul₄-gal is a šidim (considered as Aya₂-ul₄-gal-gen₇ by Burrows, PN 15); UET II, 356. 00102; UET II, 367. 00105'. By contrast, we find following writing: UET II, 87.00203. 4N₁₄ (= 4bur₃) gal:aya₂/ul₄; UET II, 181. R0102. 1N₂₂ 3N₁ (= 1 eše₃ 3 iku) Aya₂/-gal:ul₄. This may show that some scribes wrote sign clusters in a similar disposition, although it is impossible to determine, by means of palaeographical features, whether such tablets were written by the same individual or not.

⁷¹ UET II, 26. 00102. UET II, 93. R0105. UET II, 99. 00105. UET II, 177. 00201. UET II, 350. R0101.

⁷² UET II, 142. 00204. UET II, 194. 00202. UET II, 201. 00102.

Mes-ki-nu-zu	Mes-ki-nu-zu		zu:mes-ki-nu
Lugal-nam-tar-PA. SU ₁₃ +SIKIL		NAM and TAR never separated	
Igi-gi-gi Na-zi-zi ĜA ₂ -za ₇ -za ₇ Ziz ₂ -sul-sul		Reduplicated signs never separated Examples: Igi-gi-gi Ziz ₂ -sul-sul, Ziz ₂ -/sul-/sul, sul-sul:ziz ₂	
Ama-ul ₄ -gal		ul ₄ :gal:ama, gal:ama:ul ₄	
Aya ₂ -ul ₄ -gal		gal:ul ₄ :aya ₂ , ul ₄ :aya ₂ -gal	
Ama-alan		alan:ama	

As can be seen, although sign clusters are often unpredictable due to their random arrangement, some rules or habits can be deduced from the writing of personal names. Physical features of the cases/squares partly determine the way personal names are written. Sign order may also depend on numerals, their presence and the space available to their right; in some instances signs are consistently placed under numerals, such as Nanna_x in the PN Nanna_x-ur-saĝ. The size of squares (breadth and length) is another feature explaining sign arrangement, since scribes had to fill the available space with all of the signs they needed to write. Apart from such criteria, sign order may also reveal the conception of writing from the ED I–II period and the existence of habits tied to some specific names. Some signs are therefore never separated, and are consistently associated with one another, such as reduplicated signs (e.g. Igi-gi-gi, Na-zi-zi, etc.), and some expressions (gal:ul₄ in the names Lugal-ul₄-gal and Bil_x-ul₄-gal or the logogram abzu, which is almost always written zu+ab). It is also striking that some names seem to be written according to their reading, or at least display a regular sign cluster, such as En-abzu-si.

It is worth investigating whether there are further criteria, such as aesthetic or religious factors, which might explain the disposition of sign clusters corresponding to personal names. This might be the reason why some signs are always associated with one another and why a term such as abzu shows a regular sign order. There is, however, hardly any evidence for such criteria, even though we notice a strict regularity in the writing of divine names that consist of a logogram. For instance, the names of Nanna_x and ^{an}Anzu_x are always written in the same way (respectively ŠEŠ+NA, ^{an}IM+ĜE₆).⁷³ Although evidence is lacking, it seems that the practice of maintaining the same sign order is valid to a lesser extent for some professional names: thus kiĝgal is always to be found as GAL+UNKEN,⁷⁴ sagi is generally written as DU₈.

⁷³ On Anzu see Zand 2010; on the writing of Nanna, see Green and Nissen 1987, 252 (= ZATU 388), Steinkeller 1995, 705, 709–710.

⁷⁴ See the attestations in Burrows 1935, 18 (Occupation 74) and ATFU 64.

ŠU/TAK₄+SILA₃,⁷⁵ and nu-banda₃ is written in the “correct” order.⁷⁶ The term abgal, only mentioned in two tablets, is by contrast written both NUN.ME and ME.NUN;⁷⁷ similarly, maškim is written both PA.DU.KASKAL and KASKAL.PA.DU.⁷⁸ The shape, size and appearance of the signs may have also determined their arrangement within squares and lines, since tablet layout is significant for the arrangement of information. Aesthetic criteria⁷⁹ may therefore be identified in some tablets: for instance, in UET II, 61. 00103, the personal name Ama-e₂-nun-si occurs with the sign AMA above E₂, which may be related to their similar forms, since both are rectangular in appearance and are of the same size. Another example would be the previously mentioned reduplicated signs which are always associated with one another. Since Ama-ul₄-gal and Aya₂-ul₄-gal are represented with different sign orders, though both names share the element ul₄-gal, it may be that scribes applied some norms to the words to be represented. Such norms might also be shaped by aesthetic criteria. Thus, a random ordering of signs does not contradict the existence of some norms influencing their physical arrangement within the cases. Unfortunately, phrases and more developed expressions are too scanty in the archaic texts from Ur to permit any real comparison with personal names. Let it also be here observed that gu₂-an-še₃ generally occurs as an:še₃:gu₂, though there are also examples of še₃:an:gu₂.

3.2 Comparison with the Fara Period

It is well known that Fara tablets do not have a fixed sign order: “Die Anordnung der Zeichen innerhalb eines Faches ist frei, d. h. unabhängig von der Lesefolge”.⁸⁰ This can, of course, be observed in the several phrases which are attested in administrative records as well as in literary works,⁸¹ although some rules related to sign order can be found, depending for instance upon the number of signs within a square.⁸² For

⁷⁵ This profession is mainly attested in ATFU 32, 33 and 52; see ATFU 33 where it is written with TAK₄ instead of ŠU; an exception might be UET II, 112. 00303'. [... si:]iri:aya₂ / [ŠU/TAK₄?] ŠITA DU₈, but if so, then sagi would therefore consist of ŠITA instead of SILA₃, by contrast with the texts published in ATFU. Compare with the writing in Uruk: W 20501. 00302'. [DU₈?], ŠU+SILA₃.

⁷⁶ See references in Burrows 1935, 16; the only exception is UET II, 85. 00203. 2N₁ banda₃:nu.

⁷⁷ The first order is attested in ATFU 57. 00207, the second in UET II, 109. 00306.

⁷⁸ The former in UET II, 70. 00207, the latter in ATFU 52. 00102.

⁷⁹ Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 114–117, also refers to the “aesthetic profile” of cuneiform texts, which depends both on the “Textträger” and on the type of tablets in which information is written; this concept is also closely related to the significance of tablet layout for the scribes.

⁸⁰ Krebern timer 1998, 274. Deimel 1922, 4: “Die Reihenfolge der Zeichen ist völlig der Willkür des Schreibers überlassen”. The same author also attributes sign order to “Schreibbequemlichkeit”. See also Englund 2009, 10, n. 24 for new investigations on this topic.

⁸¹ Zand 2008, 10–11. See also Johnson/Johnson 2012.

⁸² Johnson/Johnson 2012, 171–172 have shown that the signs of the name of Enki, UD.GAL^{KI}/UNUG,

the convenience of the present study, we will mainly focus here upon the writing of personal names, in order to compare the features of Fara period texts to those of the previous period.⁸³ Due to the scarcity of attestations of most of the personal names in the archaic texts from Ur, however, their writing can hardly be compared with that of the names from the Fara period. This is why other personal names will also be briefly addressed.

1. Personal names attested both during the ED I–II and IIIa periods
 - En-abzu-si is only attested in WF 71. Rs. III. 6, in the “correct” order.
 - Aya₂-abzu-si is attested in RTC 4. Obv. I. 5 and UET II, 2. Rs. III. 6,⁸⁴ also in the “correct” order.
 - Ša₃-ta-nu-e₃, in comparison with Ni₃-ša₃-ta-nu-e₃, is written either in the “correct” order or as Ša₃:nu:ta-e₃, with NU below ŠA₃.⁸⁵ For Ni₃-ša₃-ta-nu-e₃ there is paradoxically more irregularity; for instance, in WF 107, it is written Ni₃-ta:ša₃-nu-e₃ and Ni₃-ta-ša₃-/UD-nu-DU.⁸⁶
 - Mes-lu₂-nu-ḥuḡ is written with less regularity than in the ED I-II texts.⁸⁷
 - Saḡ-tar seems to be consistently written tar:saḡ.
 - Ga-gu₇-gu₇, which is only rarely attested in the archaic texts from Ur but always with the same sign cluster,⁸⁸ is to be found only in WF 128. Obv. III. 7’ in what may be the “correct” order.
 - Utu-ur-saḡ: similarly to the archaic texts from Ur, Utu stands first, and is followed by ur-saḡ or saḡ:ur, or is separated from both signs.
 - Names with the element -ul₄-gal: Aya₂-ul₄-gal is randomly written,⁸⁹ Ama-ul₄-gal is attested in two texts, as Ama-/gal:ul₄ (WF 70, Rs. II. 7) and gal:ama:/ul₄ (TSŠ Rs. II, 2); by comparison, Nin-ul₄-gal is written nin-gal:ul₄, though

were placed differently according to the number of other signs which are present. This tendency is consistent with the influence of numerals on the placement of sign clustering in the archaic texts from Ur. Furthermore, according to the same scholars, sign clusters in the UD.GAL.NUN texts can show the following order: left > upper right > lower right. By contrast, archaic texts from Ur are apparently not organized according to such fixed sequences.

83 On the attestations of the personal names here chosen as samples, see also Pomponio 1987 and Visicato 1997.

84 This tablet from Ur must be dated to a later period than the usual archaic texts.

85 The former is to be found in TSŠ 1. Rs. I. 9, WF 119. Rs. III. 1; the latter in WF 22. Obv. VII. 4. WF 78. Rs. III. 9.

86 Respectively Obv. IV. 8 and V. 14.

87 For instance: CT 50, 15. Obv. II. 6. mes:nu:ḥuḡ:/lu₂. TSŠ 411. Obv. I. 3. Mes-lu₂-/nu-ḥuḡ. TSŠ 522. Obv. I. 3. 1(aš) Mes-lu₂-/ḥuḡ :nu.

88 PN 405 in UET II. ATFU 37. 00203. This name is written with GA on the left, and the reduplicated GU₇ on the right in a vertical disposition.

89 WF 6. Obv. IV. 8. Aya₂-ul₄-/gal. WF 65. Rs. I. 9. 0.2.4 Aya₂:gal:/ul₄. Compare with IAS 495 from Abū Šalābiḥ, Obv. IV. 4. Aya₂-ul₄-gal.

it is attested twice in the “correct” order of reading (TSŠ 568, Obv. I. 2; NTŠŠ 569, Rs. IV. 9).

- Names of gods: if Nanna is almost always written ŠEŠ+KI, the name of Anzu, which can be represented in five different writings,⁹⁰ is less standardized than during the ED I–II period, since the disposition of signs in AN.MI.MUŠEN, its most common writing, is not strictly maintained.

2. Other names

- Names with ^ddumu-zi: this divinity is generally represented as dumu+zi, though dumu:zi:ur and Lugal-dumu+zi can also be found for this god.
- Names with the goddess Sud₃: UR₅-tu-^dSud₃ is often written as follows: numerals ^dSud₃:/tu:UR₅ or UR₅-tu, though the sign orders are random and their disposition in the cases can vary;⁹¹ Ur-^dSud₃ is also written randomly;⁹² Inim-^dSud₃-da-zi is by contrast generally written Inim-^dSud₃-da-zi, with KA upon the other signs, though there are some exceptions.⁹³
- Names with abzu: the logogram ABZU is seemingly always written zu:ab,⁹⁴ and in contrast with other logograms, its components cannot be separated. The personal name Abzu-mud is written at random; the same is true for En-abzu-(ta)-mud, which, however, always has EN in the first position and whose sign order seems to depend on the size of the square and on the presence of numerals. In most of its occurrences Abzu-ki-du₁₀ is written in the “correct” sign order, though it also displays a random arrangement, without any visible reason.

Table 4: Sign order of a sample of Fara personal names.

Name	“Correct order”	Other fixed or preferred order	Random
En-abzu-si	En-abzu-si		
Aya ₂ -abzu-si	Aya ₂ -abzu-si		
Ša ₃ -ta-nu-e ₃	Ša ₃ -ta-nu-e ₃	Ša ₃ :nu:ta-e ₃	

⁹⁰ On this topic see Zand 2010.

⁹¹ For instance, the tablet edited by G. Visicato and A. Westenholz, Fs Cagni A 33676. Obv. VI. 8, according to the photograph available on the CDLI website (P010060).

⁹² See the tablets edited by Lambert 1971, 29–30. Obv. II. 1, VI. 7; 29–34. Rs. II. 1: those tablets show the same sign order, which could indicate that both were written by the same scribe; see also MVN 10, 86, in which Ur-^dSud₃ is mentioned three times with the same sign disposition, in the “correct” order.

⁹³ On the tablets kept in Berlin and Istanbul, sign disposition is as follows: Inim-/^dSud₃-da-/zi or similar, WF 32. Rs. I. 3, WF 34. Rs. I. 7 and II. 4, WF 35. Obv. I. 3, WF 37. Obv. IV. 3; ^dSud₃:/inim/:da-zi, TSŠ x (pl. XXXIII–XXXIV) Obv. IV. 2. We also considered 11 other contemporary attestations to be found according to the CDLI, in which the order generally conforms to Inim-^dSud₃-da-zi (cf BIN 8, 15 Obv. II. 5, Fs Cagni A 33676. Obv. III. 5).

⁹⁴ Contrary to Deimel’s assertion, see Deimel 1922, 5.

Mes-lu ₂ -nu-ḫuḡ			Mes:nu:ḫuḡ/:lu ₂ Mes-lu ₂ /:ḫuḡ:nu
Saḡ-tar		tar:saḡ	
Utu-ur-saḡ	Utu-ur-saḡ	Utu-saḡ:ur	
Aya ₂ -ul ₄ -gal	Aya ₂ -ul ₄ -gal		Aya ₂ -gal:ul ₄
Ama-ul ₄ -gal			Ama-gal:ul ₄ gal:ama:ul ₄
Nin-ul ₄ -gal	Nin-ul ₄ -gal		Nin-gal:ul ₄
UR ₅ -tu- ^d Sud ₃			^d Sud ₃ :UR ₅ :tu ^d Sud ₃ :tu:UR ₅
Ur-Dumu-zi		dumu+zi:ur	
Inim- ^d Sud ₃ -da-zi	Inim- ^d Sud ₃ -da-zi		Inim- ^d Sud ₃ -zi:da
Ur- ^d Sud ₃	Ur- ^d Sud ₃	^d Sud ₃ :ur	
Abzu-mud	Abzu-mud	mud:abzu	
En-abzu-ta-mud	En-abzu-ta-mud	En:mud:abzu-/ta	En-abzu:mud-ta
Abzu-ki-du ₁₀	Abzu-ki-du ₁₀		Abzu-du ₁₀ :ki ki-du ₁₀ :/abzu

The practice of writing is very consistent in the texts from Ur and Fara, and is characterised by a mixture of random dispositions and predefined orders, some names or terms appearing in a unique arrangement. Texts from the ED IIIa period display some differences, although this topic was not systematically studied in this paper, especially the role of the size of the cases and of the presence of numerals. There is indeed a slight tendency toward a sign order conforming to the reading or at least toward more standardized dispositions into the squares of personal names.⁹⁵ On the other hand, the sign sets which are standardized are not the same as during the ED I–II period, which conforms to the graphical evolution, as exemplified by the divine name of Dumu-zi. Furthermore, according to K. V. Zand, aesthetic criteria might have influenced sign order, especially to avoid leaving empty space: “Die Ästhetik des gleichmäßig ausgefüllten Faches war daher wohl die vorherrschende Intention hinter der freien Zeichenordnung”.⁹⁶ This scholar notices, for instance, that the verbal form nu-šar₂-šar₂ always occurs as šar₂ nu šar₂. This observation is also valid for the administrative texts in which personal names and numerals are generally arranged in order to fill most of the available space in a square. On the other hand, the archaic texts from Ur do not seem to have been produced with any systematic attention to empty spaces, which often occur.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ This matches the observations of Johnson/Johnson 2012, 171–174, on the UD.GAL.NUN texts.

⁹⁶ Zand 2008, 11.

⁹⁷ See for instance UET II, 185. O0103, with empty space on the left. UET II, 162. R0101. UET II, 70. O0107. By contrast some well-preserved tablets seem to have an “aesthetic” sign disposition similar to that of the Fara texts, see for instance cases in UET II, 109, 112, ATFU 57 and 60.

3.3 Comparison with the Uruk Period

The sign disposition in the Uruk/Jemdet Nasr tablets cannot be well understood due to three main difficulties:

- Only a few personal names can be positively identified in the proto-cuneiform texts; most of them are scarcely attested, generally in no more than two texts.⁹⁸
- Personal names are often written by means of ideographic signs,⁹⁹ so that they cannot be compared with syllabic values widely used in the archaic texts from Ur, though it must be noted that archaic texts also show the use of phonetic signs, as others have observed.¹⁰⁰
- Personal names from the Uruk period are hardly similar to those from later periods, according to the hypothesis that proto-cuneiform writing might not have been used by Sumerian scribes.¹⁰¹

We can therefore take as examples a sample of (personal) names attested during the Uruk period:

1. EN_a AN RU is attested in the list Officials, 21¹⁰² and several times in administrative documents as EN_a AN RU;¹⁰³ only in one (unpublished) text is a different order, AN EN_a RU,¹⁰⁴ found, while in other occurrences the sign AN seems to be omitted.¹⁰⁵
2. ŠUBUR E_{2a}×IN₅₇ is attested in three texts, each time with a different sign arrangement.¹⁰⁶
3. EN_a 𒄩 UNUG_a (En-Unug-du₁₀) is attested in only two texts from the Uruk period: BagM 22, W 24007, 4. 00201. [...] EN_a UNUG_a / 𒄩. BagM 22, W 24013, 22. 00102. 1N₁ EN_a UNUG_a / 𒄩; both have the same sign disposition, which is different from that of an archaic text from Ur: ATFU 50. R0106. du₁₀:en-Unug.

⁹⁸ On this topic see Englund 2009.

⁹⁹ Falkenstein 1936, 29–36; Englund 1998, 79, who suggests that archaic “bookkeeping is not language oriented”; Glassner 2000, 113–138.

¹⁰⁰ See the observations of Steinkeller 1995 and Glassner 2000.

¹⁰¹ According to the author’s research, only five personal names common to the Uruk and ED I–II periods can yet be identified, such as Zur-zur and En-Unug-du₁₀. On the “linguistic” landscape of Mesopotamia, see Rubio 1999.

¹⁰² ATU 3, 88; in W 19771, h and 24015, 1, it is written in the “standard” way, in W 15895, w without AN.

¹⁰³ For instance ATU 6, W 14111, r. R0201; ATU 6, W 15775, d. 00304; BagM 22, W 24033, 3. 00101; MSVO 3, 15. 00101; also unpublished texts, such as IM 073409, 2. 00206.

¹⁰⁴ MS 4494. 00203, photograph available on the CDLI website (P006297).

¹⁰⁵ ATU 6, W14329, a+. 00201, MSVO 3, 17. 00201’ though both cases are damaged. See also MS 2442. 00104. 1N₁ EN_a RU BU_a.

¹⁰⁶ MSVO 3, 14. 00104. ŠUBUR E_{2a}×IN₅₇. MSVO 3, 17. 00102. E_{2a}×IN₅₇+ŠUBUR. MSVO 3, 18. 00205. E_{2a}×IN₅₇ ŠUBUR.

4. $EN_a \text{ } \text{H} \text{I} \text{ } \check{S}A_{3a1}$, mainly attested in unpublished documents, is generally written EN_a / $\text{H} \text{I} + \check{S}A_{3a1}$, with $\text{H} \text{I}$ close to $\check{S}A_{3a1}$ and below EN_a .
5. $GUL \text{ } BU_a + DU_{6a}$ ¹⁰⁷ consists of a possible geographical/divine name, followed by the element GUL , which is also found in another personal name, $GUL \text{ } KITI$; $GUL \text{ } BU_a + DU_{6a}$ is attested in six texts and its sign order within these is random.¹⁰⁸

Names consisting of $PIRIG_a$ or $3N_{57} + PIRIG_a$: as a colophon to one of the manuscripts of the archaic City List we find $E_{2a} \text{ } 3N_{57} + PIRIG_a$,¹⁰⁹ which is also attested in two administrative documents with a different sign order.¹¹⁰ This name may be identical to $3N_{57} + PIRIG_a \text{ } DU \text{ } E_2$ ¹¹¹ or to $3N_{57} + PIRIG_a \text{ } SAL \text{ } ^1E_{2a} \text{ } ^1A[B?]$,¹¹² both of which are attested in only one text, respectively. Sign order is not strictly determined.

Table 5: Examples of sign order of names in the archaic texts.

Name	“Correct order”?	Other fixed or preferred order	Random
$EN_a \text{ } AN \text{ } RU$	$EN_a \text{ } AN \text{ } RU$		$AN \text{ } EN_a \text{ } RU$
$\check{S}UBUR \text{ } E_{2a} \times 1N_{57}$	$\check{S}UBUR \text{ } E_{2a} \times 1N_{57}$		$E_{2a} \times 1N_{57} \text{ } \check{S}UBUR$
$EN_a \text{ } UNUG_a \text{ } \text{H} \text{I}$ (En-Unug-du ₁₀)	$EN_a \text{ } UNUG_a \text{ } / \text{H} \text{I}$		
$EN_a \text{ } \text{H} \text{I} \text{ } \check{S}A_{3a1}$		$EN_a \text{ } / \text{H} \text{I} + \check{S}A_{3a1}$	
$GUL \text{ } BU_a + DU_{6a}$			$GUL \text{ } BU_a + DU_{6a}$ $BU_a + DU_{6a} \text{ } GUL$

Although it is a matter of speculation, the sign order of the personal names in the archaic texts does not seem to be firmly defined but is, as in later periods, rather random in nature, even if some sign sets are standardized and suggest the use of some norms. Logograms of professional names are also not standardized, as is proven by the title $ENGIZ$, $EN.ME.GI$, whose sign set can be written in different orders.

3.4 Material Sign Disposition during the Early Third Millennium

From the Late Uruk to the ED IIIa period and onward, signs are to a varying extent freely arranged into cases and lines which do not form a binding framework for

¹⁰⁷ Englund 2009, 21.

¹⁰⁸ The disposition of the signs can, however, partially be explained: the sign $BU_a + DU_{6a}$, which is longer, generally occurs first when there is no numeral, for instance in MSVO 4, 58. 00201b2; in other tablets, such as MSVO 4, 36. 00203, GUL stands on the right of the numerals.

¹⁰⁹ ATU 3, colophon of W 20266,74. R0101, manuscript of the archaic City List.

¹¹⁰ MSVO 3, 12. 00203. MSVO 4, 44. 00102.

¹¹¹ ATU 5, W 15772,z. 00302b. See also Englund 2009, 21.

¹¹² ATU 6, 15774,b. 00201.

writing. Beyond such random disposition, however, some norms and rules can be seen which partly determine the relationships of signs to each other within the frame of clusters. Such norms seem to change according to the evolution of the writing system and may be tied to the underlying values of cuneiform scripts. In the mainly ideographic use of writing during the Late Uruk period, signs are generally randomly arranged but some more stable combinations can also be found. The ED I–II texts are the first documents known to mainly use the phonetic value of signs to write personal names and Sumerian sentences, even if protocuneiform writing had already proved to be partially syllabic, but to a much lesser extent. Personal names were at that time represented in several pieces corresponding to the semantic and grammatical elements of which they consisted.¹¹³ These parts reproduce the meaning of the name, such as Nanna_x-ur-saĝ, “Nanna is a hero”, Ama-e₂-nun-si, “The mother fills the E₂-nun shrine”, etc. Names analysed according to their phonetic features can also be identified: Na-zi-zi, Ga-gu₇-gu₇, and further names with reduplicated signs. Random sign disposition of personal names during the ED I–II period may therefore be a consequence of the introduction of new phonetic values. Once signs were assigned a value, scribes did not need to write them in the “correct” order according to our modern reading, because the personal names recorded were naturally well-known to them.¹¹⁴ The Fara tablets share the same features as the texts from Ur, although there is a slight tendency toward more regularity: these texts also represent Sumerian personal names by breaking them down into several component elements, and inherit the method broadly used in the archaic texts from Ur.

Further comprehensive studies on sign order during the Uruk and Fara periods are still expected, but one should be aware that the word “random” must be used carefully when referring to the disposition of cuneiform signs. Sign order in the ED I–II texts happens to be determined by other possible criteria, such as the available space, the presence of numerals, the way logograms are written and the gathering of similar signs. This study focused only on the rules observable in the texts in question, but in the Uruk and Fara periods sign order may have also acquired a meaning which is related to the conception of writing. During the time of the invention of writing, sign order is mainly conceived in relation to the numerous logograms, whereas phonetic values, having emerged only recently, do not necessarily form a binding frame-

¹¹³ On the structure of Sumerian personal names, see for instance Krebernik 2002, 8–10, Andersson 2012, 57–70.

¹¹⁴ Moreover, the practice of conforming the arrangement of signs to their reading is a later tendency, which dates from the time of the reign of Ur-Nanše. Since administrative texts from early periods were, according to Selz 2007, 74, necessarily unambiguous (*Bedürfnis nach Eindeutigkeit*), the apparent difficulty of sign order should only be considered to be the result of “unsere Unkenntnis der Kontexte, der Codes”, and was therefore not an ambiguous feature from the point of view of the scribes. Determining which meaning is at the basis of sign order is the task of modern hermeneutics.

work for the arrangement of signs within the squares.¹¹⁵ Writing did not reproduce the words of a language, and therefore did not conform to the order of phonetic values.¹¹⁶ Later, during the third millennium, different norms regarding the sign order of personal names were in use, which are tied with the evolution of writing, especially phonetic values and religious or aesthetic conception.

4 Conclusion

ED I–II texts exhibit some material features which may be considered as evidence for this poorly documented span of time and its position between the Late Uruk and Fara traditions. The shape and format of those texts appear to be intermediate and share features with the Uruk as well as the Fara tablets. Such features as the oblong format, uninscribed reverse, and rows of lines are shared with the Uruk period; on the contrary, other material features are forerunners of later tablets, especially the flat obverse and convex reverse, which are similar to the shape used for ED IIIb texts. Furthermore, tablet layout includes non-writing marks: the archaic texts from Ur, in contrast with proto-cuneiform or Fara tablets, do not display standardized kinds of designs. The presence of clauses is another feature typical of the ED I–II tablets: whereas the use of the term *gu₂-an-še₃*, which is not attested in the proto-cuneiform documentation, to refer to the total is definitely a “modern” aspect, the isolated sign sets, referring either to an administrator or to the content of a text, seem closer to the habits of the Uruk period. The tablets’ layout and diplomatics are therefore significant for their cultural evolution and offer evidence of the peculiarities of the ED I–II tradition.

On the other hand, the ED I–II period corresponds to the first attempt at inventing and using phonetic values to represent Sumerian personal names, in contrast to the ideographic Late Uruk mode of writing.¹¹⁷ Signs were at that time not arranged according to their reading, but rather in a random fashion or according to other criteria. The size of the cases, the available space, and the presence of numerals partly determined sign arrangement in the archaic texts from Ur, which therefore had a material aspect. Since writing did not aim to follow the reading nor the pronunciation of the signs, scribes mainly took care to fill the cases and lines. It is, on the other hand, noticeable

115 It is, however, noticeable that one of the few personal names to be found in the archaic texts which is also attested in the ED I–II tablets from Ur, *En-Unug-du₁₀*, “the lord is good to Uruk” or “the good lord of Uruk”, is written in the “correct” order.

116 Krebern timer 2007, 40.

117 On the relationships between writing and language in Mesopotamia, see Krebern timer 2007. It is worth investigating whether the aforementioned evolution is consistent with a new conception of the use of writing and reading, especially in respect to the language represented.

that some sign sets are more standardized and may reveal the existence of aesthetic or religious criteria: for instance, reduplicated signs in personal names like Na-zi-zi generally follow each other; similarly, divine names represented by a logogram display a relatively fixed order. The scribes during the Fara period also used free and random sign order, but introduced some slight changes in respect to the ED I–II tradition. From now on, materiality may also be approached through palaeographical studies, which could improve our interpretations of the archaic texts from Ur: further studies on sign evolution between the Late Uruk and Fara periods, as well as an updated version of the sign table edited by E. Burrows in UET II, are still expected. Another interesting future problem is the interpretation of sign disposition in Uruk and Fara texts which might show that such criteria as “randomness” or “aesthetics” do not suffice to explain the way in which graphical components are arranged within cases. Since Mesopotamian texts, as suggested by Selz, are the result of a collective codification,¹¹⁸ sign order surely had a meaning in the framework of the linear and non-linear structures of the third millennium tablets.

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¹¹⁸ Selz 2007, 67; id., 74 refers to the “lineare Anordnung” of the archaic texts, which aimed to represent unambiguous information; however, since the writing of the words and terms did not conform to the reading of the signs, this linearity did not contradict the existence of other meaning networks (see Selz 2007, 86, 6).

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A. Sample of Archaic Texts from Ur

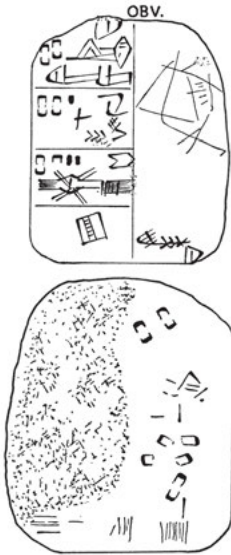


Fig. 1: UET II, 55.



Fig. 2: UM 37-07-070 = UET II, 252 © Published courtesy of the Penn Museum.



Fig. 3: BM 128913 = UET II, 61 © The Trustees of the British Museum.

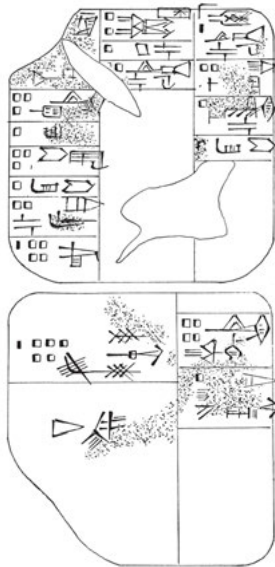


Fig. 4: UET II, 177 (taken from Burrows 1935, pl. XXII).



Fig. 5: ATFU 56 © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 6: ATFU 57 © The Trustees of the British Museum.



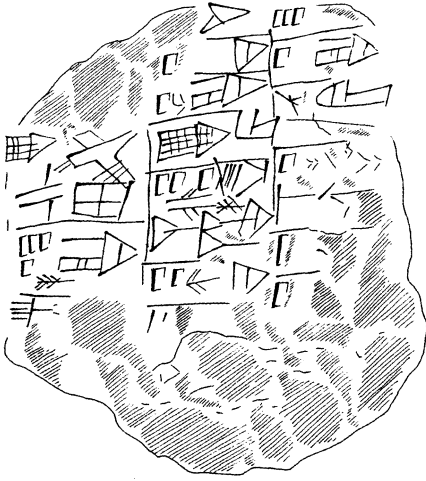


Fig. 7: ATFU 33 (Copy by Camille Lecompte).¹¹⁹

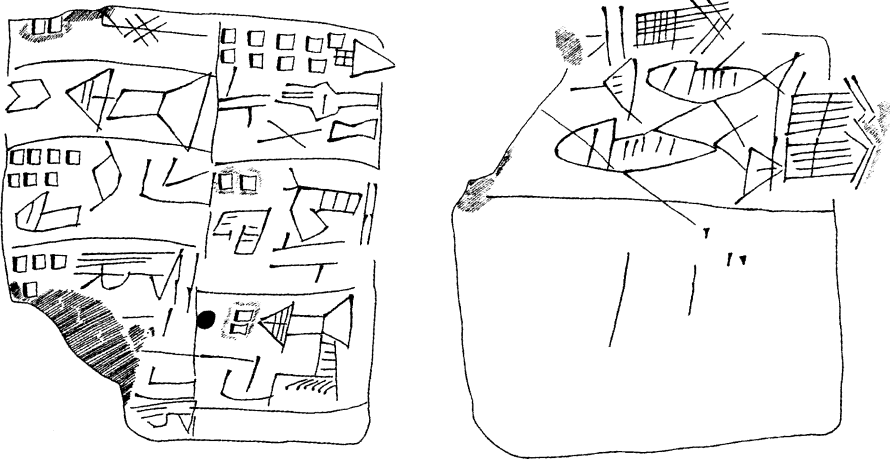


Fig. 8: ATFU 55 (Copy of the reverse by Camille Lecompte).¹²⁰

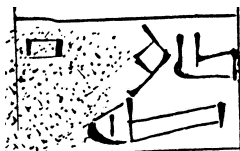
¹¹⁹ Including following corrections to the original edition: O0103'. lu[gal]. O0201. ġešin/din?.

¹²⁰ Including following correction: R0101. x A KA₂ GIR DIM₃ DIM₃ A KA₂ SAL KA₂.

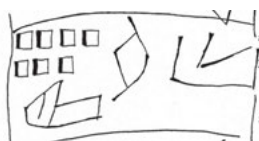
B. Writing of Personal Names in the Archaic Texts from Ur (3.1)

1. Utu-ur-saĝ

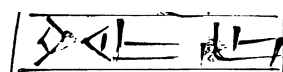
UET II, 128. 00305'.



ATFU 55. 00103.

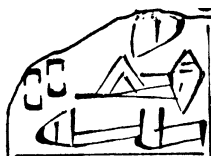


UET II, 340. 00120.

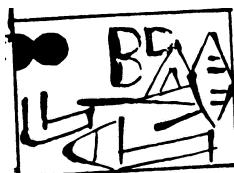


2. Nanna_x-ur-saĝ

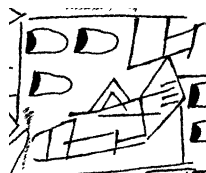
UET II, 55. 00101.



UET II, 87. 00306.



ATFU 60. 00305.



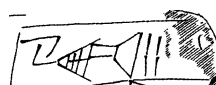
4. Names consisting of the verb -si

4. a. Aya₂-abzu-si

UET II, 127. 00206.



ATFU 50. R0101.



4. b. Ama-e₂-si

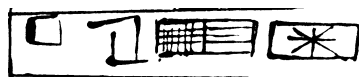
UET II, 00207.



UET II, 255. 00205.

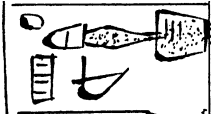


UET II, 259 00202.



6. Mes-lu₂-nu-ḫuḡ

UET II, 62. 00103.

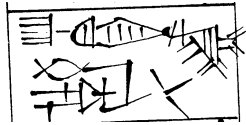


ATFU 57. 00302.



7. Lugal-nam-tar-PA.SU₁₃+SIKIL

UET II, 101. 00102.



UET II, 101. 00106.



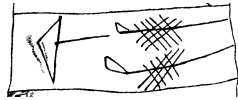
UET II, 224. 00104.



8. Names consisting of a reduplicated sign

8. a. Igi-gi-gi

ATFU 2. R0103.

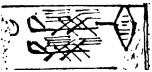


ATFU 60. 00402.

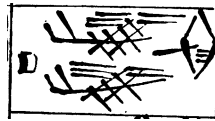


8. b. Na-zi-zi

UET II, 112. 00203.



UET II, 274. 00205'.

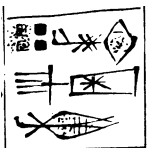


UET II, 71. 00104.

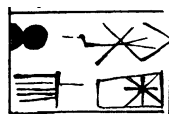


9. a. Ama-ul₄-gal

UET II, 48. 00202.



UET II, 87. 00303.



UET II, 241. 00303.



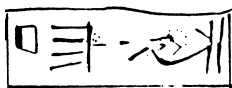
ATFU 23. 00202.



9. b. Aya₂-ul₄-gal
UET II, 24. 00201.



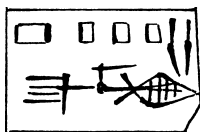
UET II, 84. 00201'.



UET II, 152. 00102.



UET II, 181. R0102.



Jean M. Evans

Materiality, Writing, and Context in the Inana Temple at Nippur: The Dedicatory Objects from Level VIIB

1 Introduction to the Inana Temple at Nippur

From early times, Nippur (modern Niffar or Nuffar), had a religious significance. The city remained a holy center throughout Mesopotamian history, and rulers consequently sought recognition from Nippur for legitimate rule, first over Sumer and Akkad and later over Babylonia and Assyria. Such recognition depended on the dedication of precious objects, wealth, and property to the E-kur, the temple and ziggurat of Enlil, and other temples in the city. This practice was one aspect of a larger system of dedicating objects to Mesopotamian temples.

The religious nature of Nippur prevented it from suffering most of the destructions that befell other cities. Excavations in the Inana Temple area, located just southwest of the Temple of Enlil, were undertaken during the fifth through the eighth seasons—from 1955 to 1962—of the Joint Expedition of the University of Chicago and the American Schools of Oriental Research.¹ The excavations provided the longest continuous archaeological sequence for a Mesopotamian site. Some twenty building levels, dating back to the Middle Uruk period (4th millennium BCE), were exposed. The Inana Temple itself was in existence by the Early Dynastic period (2900–2350 BCE) and thereafter was continuously rebuilt until the Parthian period (247 BCE–224 AD), some three thousand years later.

Efforts to produce a final publication for the Inana Temple excavations have been multi-generational. The excavations were conducted under the direction of Richard C. Haines. After Haines passed away in 1977, the publication was being prepared by Donald P. Hansen at the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University. After Hansen passed away in 2007, the excavation records were archived at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The final manuscript of the Inana Temple excavations subsequently was edited and prepared by Richard L. Zettler, Karen Wilson, Robert D. Biggs, and the present author under the direction of McGuire Gibson. The final publication will appear in multiple Oriental Institute Publications volumes over several years.

When reference is made below to unpublished Inana Temple objects, the field number assigned during excavation is cited in order to allow these objects to be identified in the forthcoming publications.

¹ Hansen/Dales 1962; Gibson/Hansen/Zettler 2001.

The inscribed materials retrieved from the Inana Temple excavations at Nippur provide an excellent opportunity for the study of inscription, object type, and archaeological context, which was the central focus of the “Materiality and Writing” workshop out of which this contribution grew. The focus here is on the inscribed objects dedicated during the time of Inana Temple level VIIB, which is dated to the Early Dynastic IIIA period on the basis of Fara-type tablets.² The categories of inscribed dedicatory objects from level VIIB are presented first according to archaeological context and then according to object typology. The contribution concludes by considering how a text and materiality approach might offer insight into the dedicatory objects retrieved from the Inana Temple.

2 Contextual Overview of Inana Temple Dedicatory Objects

The architectural remains encountered in the earliest excavated levels of the Inana Temple area (levels XIX–XV), dated to the Uruk period, were domestic in nature. The remains of the succeeding Jamdat Nasr period (levels XIV–XII) continued to have a domestic quality. By the end of the Jamdat Nasr period (level XII), a portion of a large structure with an orderly arrangement of rooms and courts was uncovered.³ The remains revealed neither architectural characteristics nor material finds distinctive enough to reveal the function of level XII. The Early Dynastic I remains (levels XI–IX) followed earlier plans but grew increasingly complex.

In Inana Temple level IX, divided into the earlier IXB and the later IXA construction phases, the excavators were struck by the large quantities of mud plaster used on the walls, floors, and installations of the central rooms (IT 257 and IT 258 of level IXB and IT 246 and IT 248 of level IXA).⁴ The rooms were in a location corresponding with the later sanctuary area of the Inana Temple. The mud-plastered installations also resembled those common to Early Dynastic temples and included furniture typically described as altars, offering tables, and benches. The excavators therefore maintained that the level IX remains represented the first temple in the Inana Temple sequence.

² Porada et al. 1993, 107.

³ Wilson 1986, fig. 3.

⁴ See Zettler et al. (forthcoming); see also Zettler 1992, figs. 4–5; Gibson/Hansen/Zettler 2001, fig. 3.

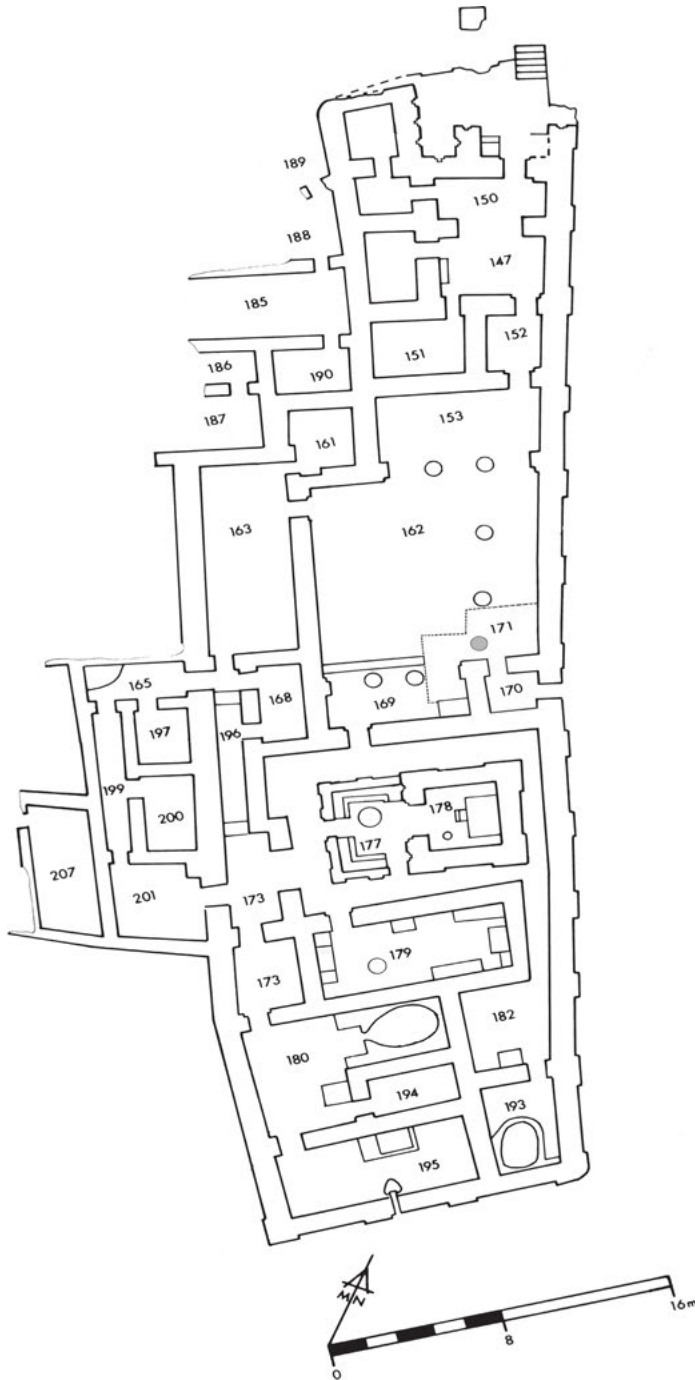


Fig. 1: Nippur, Inana Temple level VIIB, plan representing various subphases (adapted by Jean M. Evans; Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

The level IXA walls of the Inana Temple subsequently were razed, and the area was roughly leveled. Level VIII was constructed on a low mud-brick platform.⁵ At the core of the level VIII structure was a court with two free-standing sanctuaries. One sanctuary had a bent-axis approach typical of Early Dynastic temple architecture, and the other sanctuary had a straight-axis approach. Fragments of inscribed stone vessels (7 N 399, 7 N 405) and a fragment of an inscribed stone door plaque (7 N 251) were retrieved. None of these level VIII inscriptions, presumably dedicatory in nature, were complete enough to determine the divine recipient.

The first unequivocal dedications to the goddess Inana were from the succeeding level VIIB of the Inana Temple.⁶ The plan of level VIIB followed that of level VIII, but the temple was larger and its internal divisions were more complex (fig. 1). Cultic functions appear to have been concentrated to the north of the central sanctuary area, with work functions concentrated to the south. Specifically, activities involving liquids were located in the north, an inference derived from the number of wells, drains, and other installations, and large ovens were located in the south.⁷ The northern and southern portions of level VIIB of the Inana Temple were linked by a long corridor west of the central sanctuary area.

Stone vessels, statues, door plaques, and pegs comprise the categories of inscribed dedicatory objects retrieved from the Early Dynastic levels of the Inana Temple.⁸ One notable object type missing from the Inana Temple assemblage of inscribed dedications is the stone mace head. Even uninscribed stone mace heads are rare among the Inana Temple assemblages; level VIIB yielded only two. During the Early Dynastic period, surviving inscribed mace heads were all dedicated by male donors, and the greatest quantity of mace heads, in general, was retrieved from a temple with a male resident deity.⁹ Perhaps the lack of inscribed mace heads in the Inana Temple should be linked with the special relationship that female patrons had with the temple, discussed below, particularly since maces are dominant in the warrior iconography of Inana (Ištar).

The majority of inscribed dedicatory objects retrieved from level VIIB were found in hoards comprised of groups of buried objects. The clearest examples of hoards in the Inana Temple are those buried below floors, such as below the earliest level VIIB floor in sanctuary IT 179 (fig. 2).¹⁰ Other hoards in level VIIB include the group of dedicatory objects built into an installation for liquids in IT 173 (fig. 2). The objects built into the IT 173 installation were also reused as construction material, whereas the objects

⁵ Zettler 1992, fig. 6; Gibson/Hansen/Zettler 2001, fig. 4.

⁶ Goetze 1970; Braun-Holzinger 1991.

⁷ Zettler in Zettler et al. (forthcoming).

⁸ Braun-Holzinger 1991.

⁹ Delougaz/Lloyd 1942, 266ff. (Tell Agrab, Shara Temple); Braun-Holzinger 1991, 28.

¹⁰ Hansen/Dales 1962, 79.

below the IT 179 floor appear to have served no additional function. That is, the hoard below the IT 179 floor served only as a method of disposal.¹¹

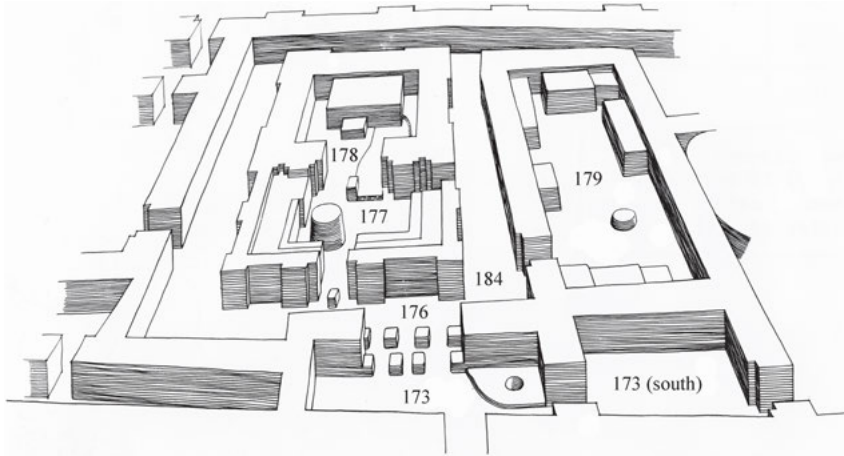


Fig. 2: Nippur, Inana Temple level VIIB, isometric drawing of the sanctuary area representing various subphases (adapted by Jean M. Evans; Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

Another group of dedicatory objects from level VIIB were laid out on the benches against the short west wall of sanctuary IT 179 and covered with mud plaster (fig. 3). It is unclear from the excavation notes whether the objects in the IT 179 benches comprise a hoard. That is, it is unclear whether the objects were gathered and buried at one time as opposed to, for example, whenever a periodic re-plastering of the benches occurred.¹² The statues in the bench of sanctuary IT 179 therefore do not necessarily comprise a single group of objects gathered at one distinct point in time.



Fig. 3: Nippur, Inana Temple level VIIB, some of the dedicatory objects in situ which had been laid out on the benches against the short west wall of sanctuary IT 179 and covered with mud plaster (Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

¹¹ Hansen/Dales 1962, 79; Braun-Holzinger 1991, 9–11.

¹² Zettler in Zettler et al. (forthcoming).

Certainly, some of the stone dedicatory objects gathered in hoards and buried below the earliest floor of level VIIB may have originated in level VIII. In general, temple dedications form a category of object which is curated.¹³ Nevertheless, level VIIB still contains the majority of stone dedicatory objects retrieved from the Inana Temple. For example, four sculpture fragments were catalogued from level VIII proper of the Inana Temple. In contrast, some sixty statues and statue fragments, many of which formed joins, were retrieved from level VIIB and from hoards below the earliest floor of level VIIB. Level VIIA of the Inana Temple yielded few finds overall and only four sculpture fragments. To cite another example, seven relief-carved stone plaques were retrieved from level VIII of the Inanna Temple. In contrast, eighteen relief-carved stone plaques were retrieved from level VIIB. No relief-carved stone plaques were retrieved from level VIIA of the Inana Temple.

3 Stone Vessels

Richard Zettler¹⁴ studied the some 285 stone vessels and vessel fragments retrieved during the Inana Temple excavations. Of these, some 230 stone vessels are from the Early Dynastic levels (XI–VII), and some 100 are specifically from level VIIB.

A quarter of the level VIIB stone vessels were inscribed. The majority—some twelve vessels—were dedicated by women.¹⁵ One of the female donors is described as the wife of the *ensi* of Nippur. Two VIIB stone vessels were dedicated by a male and female donor together. Six were dedicated solely by male donors. The majority of inscribed stone vessels from level VIIB are bowls.

Five level VIIB stone vessels were incorporated into installations for liquids associated with libations or washing. Two of these five level VIIB stone vessels were inscribed. The first example is a stone beaker (7 N 119)¹⁶ inscribed “*d*Inana”. The beaker was retrieved from IT 201, where it had been sunk into a lime-plastered area of the floor northwest of the doorway leading into IT 173 (fig. 1). The rim of the beaker was flush with the floor. The inscription on the beaker therefore would not have been visible. It cannot be discounted that the beaker might have been reused in this position. That is, the beaker may have been an independent container for liquids before it was incorporated into the IT 201 installation.

The second inscribed stone vessel incorporated into an installation for liquids is a bowl (7 N 639)¹⁷ bearing a dedication to Inana by an individual with the title of *sanga*.

¹³ Evans 2012.

¹⁴ Zettler in Zettler et al. (forthcoming).

¹⁵ Goetze 1970, 39; Braun-Holzinger 1991, 96.

¹⁶ Goetze 1970.

¹⁷ Goetze 1970.

The bowl was retrieved from an installation for liquids in the southeast corner of IT 173 (fig. 2). The IT 173 installation was comprised of a low bitumen-coated platform. The bowl was sunk below the surface of the platform at the center. The inscription therefore would not have been visible. Part of the rim was broken, however, which might suggest that the bowl was reused in the platform. Therefore, as with the beaker (7 N 119) discussed above, the bowl may have been an independent container for liquids before it was incorporated into the IT 173 installation.



Fig. 4: Nippur, Inana Temple level VIIB, sculpted and inlaid stone vessels (7 N 010, 7 N 014, 7 N 178, 7 N 207) (Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

In general, Inana Temple relief-carved and sculpted stone vessels, including bowls with a protome as a pouring spout, vessels supported on the backs of recumbent animals, and multi-compartmented stone “cosmetic” containers, are not usually inscribed (fig. 4). One exception from level VIIB is the relief-carved steatite beaker probably imported from the Iranian highlands (7 N 120).¹⁸ The beaker is inscribed “*dInana pa4-nun*”. Perhaps it is noteworthy that this inscription as well as two other inscriptions on sculpted stone vessels (7 N 399 from VIII and 6 N 422 from VIIA)¹⁹ different from the majority of dedicatory inscriptions on level VIIB stone vessels which are not sculpted. First, the inscriptions on the three sculpted stone vessels are not written in cases. Second, they do not contain a verb of dedication. Finally, two of the

¹⁸ Goetze 1970; see Majidzadeh 2003 for parallels.

¹⁹ Goetze 1970.

three inscriptions appear to be inscribed only with the name (and, in one example, a title?) of the goddess, understood as “to” or “for” Inana.

It is possible to observe that among the stone vessels of the Inana Temple, the vessel generally will either have an inscription or sculpted imagery but will not have both. Cosmetic containers, which refer to a type of stone vessel with multiple small receptacles in the top, are an important exception (fig. 4). This vessel type forms more than a quarter of the stone vessel corpus in Inana Temple level VIIB. Cosmetic containers are so-called since residual pigments were occasionally present in the receptacles of the Inana Temple examples and were also found in comparable vessels from Bismaya and Ur. Cosmetic containers, regardless of whether or not they are sculpted, are seldom inscribed. The one inscribed example from the Inana Temple (6 N 422) has “^dInana” scratched on its side. The lack of inscribed examples raises the question: are all stone cosmetic containers objects of dedication?

4 Sculpture

As discussed above, some sixty statues and statue fragments, many of which formed joins, were retrieved from level VIIB and from a hoard below the earliest floor of level VIIB of the Inana Temple. Some eighteen female figures and sixteen male figures are preserved, and one additional statue is of a male and female figure seated together. Other sculpture fragments are too poorly preserved to determine the gender of the donor.

Six statues from level VIIB are inscribed. Five of the inscribed examples are comprised solely of the name and title of an individual, presumably the individual who is represented and who donated the statue (7 N 136 + 155, 7 N 170, 7 N 171, 7 N 202, 7 N 205). This practice contrasts with the level VIIB stone vessels inscribed solely with the name of the goddess Inana. That is, as a general rule, a statue may have an inscription comprised solely of the name and title of the donor whereas a stone vessel may have an inscription comprised solely of the name of the goddess. Perhaps this contrast in practice can be tied to ideological aspects of the alan as bearing some essence of the individual represented.²⁰

The inscribed statues from level VIIB of the Inana Temple all represent male donors. Four inscribed male figures are associated with IT 179, the bent-axis sanctuary. Of the inscribed statues associated with IT 179, two were found buried among a hoard of objects below the earliest level VIIB floor and two were laid out on the benches against the short west wall and covered with mud plaster sometime during the time of level VIIB. The other two inscribed male figures were built into the IT 173

²⁰ Morandi 1988; Beran 1989; Bonatz 2002; Bahrani 2003.

installation for liquids. They were found, along with stone vessel fragments, door plaque fragments, a mace head, and a furniture attachment, underneath the baked mud bricks forming the low platform of the installation. The stone medium of the objects might have facilitated the drainage of liquids.

Despite the utilitarian aspect of using stone as a construction material in an installation for liquids, there is some evidence that the stone dedicatory objects built into the IT 173 installation were not randomly selected. A total of eight sculpture fragments—two inscribed and six uninscribed—were built into the IT 173 installation for liquids. Seven of these eight sculpture fragments are from male figures; the eighth fragment is a base (fig. 5). One of the only two mace heads retrieved from level VIIB was also used in the IT 173 installation. As noted above, mace heads are a type of dedicatory object associated with male donors. In addition, as discussed above, the vessel set in the center of the IT 173 installation was dedicated by a male donor with the title of *sanga*. Finally, as discussed below, a fragment of a plaque dedicated by a male donor was also buried in the IT 173 installation.



Fig. 5: Nippur, Inana Temple level VIIB, excavation of IT 173 installation, with objects that had been buried in the installation in the foreground (Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

That stone dedicatory objects were purposefully selected for the IT 173 installation is reinforced by the depositional pattern of the sculpture fragments belonging to the statues buried therein. Five of the eight sculpture fragments built into the IT 173 installation were comprised of the majority of the statue in IT 173 with additional smaller fragments of the statue in IT 194. The pattern suggests a purposeful separation of the

sculptures to separate loci. IT 194 contained a bread oven in the northwestern corner and a large number of object fragments in general. It is unclear why the fragments had been collected there.

Reinforcing the gendered selection of dedicatory objects for the IT 173 installation is the presence of another context in level VIIB from which only statues of female figures were retrieved. Given the large quantity of sculpture and stone vessels dedicated by female donors, it has often been observed that the Inana Temple at Nippur had a special relationship with female patrons.²¹ Four fragmentary statues of female figures were found lying on a bitumen-coated pavement surrounding a well in IT 171, which constituted a secondary entrance to the Inana Temple in level VIIB (fig. 1). The stone of additional sculpture was in such poor condition that the statues could not be preserved; although they were not catalogued, mention is made of them in the field notes. Perhaps the IT 173 installation for liquids was a sphere of male cultic activity and therefore only dedications by male donors were buried within it. In contrast, the sculpture on the IT 171 pavement might signify a sphere of female cultic activity.²²

5 Door Plaques

All the plaques included in this category are a specific type that is rectangular in shape with a central hole. A raised border frames a relief-carved or worked area, beyond which unworked stone may be present on all four sides. The relief-carved decoration is typically divided into three horizontal registers. During the Early Dynastic period, the main subject of such plaques is that of a banquet in which seated figures in the upper register are attended upon. A procession is typically depicted in the lower registers.²³

Building on an earlier study by Hansen,²⁴ the functional role of this plaque type was demonstrated by Zettler²⁵ through a study of Ur III sealing practices in level IV of the Inana Temple. The Ur III sealings indicated that a peg driven through the center of the plaque would have secured a cord or hook, which in turn secured a door. Together, the stone plaque and the peg thus formed a locking device for doors. Some Early Dynastic archaeological evidence also supports the function of these types of plaques as locking devices for doors. A plaque (7 N 408) from level VIII of the Inana Temple was found in IT 219 near the north doorway. In the Early Dynastic level IV of the North Temple at Nippur, a plaque was found upside down on the floor, by the

²¹ Hansen/Dales 1962, 80.

²² Evans 2012, 197, 201.

²³ Boese 1971.

²⁴ Hansen 1963

²⁵ Zettler 1987.

doorway, where it had presumably fallen from the wall (fig. 6).²⁶ Donald Hansen²⁷ suggested that a peg would have been inserted through the small central hole in the knob still affixed to the North Temple plaque.

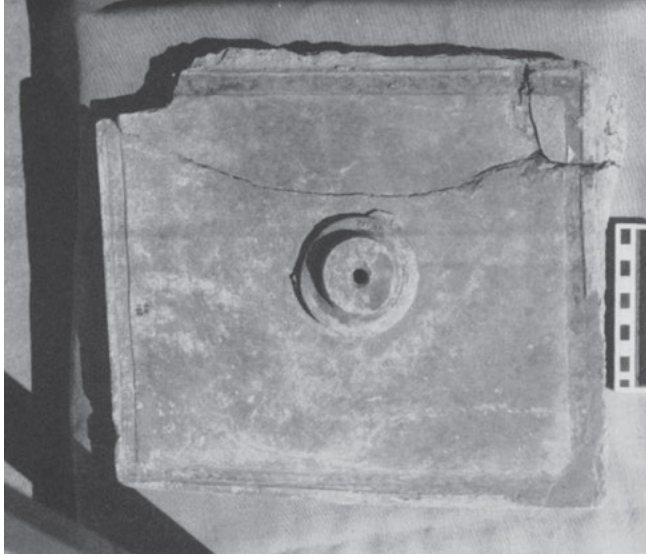


Fig. 6: Nippur, North Temple level IV, Early Dynastic door plaque (4 N 186) with central knob (Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

In addition, some plaques have small dowel holes in the stone beyond the relief-carved or worked area of the plaques. The dowel holes support the installation of the plaques vertically, since they would not be necessary if the plaques were to be laid horizontally. An earlier hypothesis that the plaques, laid horizontally, served as supports for standards or maces therefore is untenable. When set into a wall, presumably the unworked stone, when present, was plastered over so that only the relief-carved area was visible.

The door plaques retrieved from the Inana Temple are, with few exceptions, from levels VIII and VII. However, because Zettler²⁸ identified the reverse impressions of door plaques on level IV clay sealings, we know that door plaques continued to be utilized in the Inana Temple. The door plaques identified from the level IV clay sealings appear to have lacked relief carving but were inscribed. The preserved portions of the

²⁶ McCown/Haines/Biggs 1978.

²⁷ Hansen 1963, 147.

²⁸ Zettler 1987.

inscriptions are a duplicate of the Shulgi building inscription found either on baked bricks or on pivot stones in the Inana temple.²⁹

Three of the stone door plaques retrieved from Early Dynastic levels of the Inana Temple were inscribed (7 N 133 + 134, 7 N 251, 7 N 309).³⁰ A door plaque fragment from level VIII (7 N 251) has an illegible inscription and was found on top of either the altar or bench in sanctuary IT 218.³¹ The fragment preserves the upper right corner in which a seated female banqueter is attended by a standing female figure; a portion of a bull rearing up against vegetation is also preserved.

In level VIIB, a small fragment from a slate plaque with an inlaid border (7 N 309) around the central worked area is inscribed “^dInana”. The fragment was retrieved from IT 194, in which, as noted above, was found a quantity of objects perhaps gathered as raw materials to be recycled.

The best preserved of the inscribed door plaques (7 N 133 + 7 N 134) was reconstructed from fragments retrieved in level VIIB from both IT 194 and from within the IT 173 installation described above. It is inscribed: “To NIN.sar, Lumma, the chief stone cutter, dedicated (this)”. The separation of the plaque fragments between IT 194 and the IT 173 installation follows the pattern established by the statues of male figures, discussed above, and supports the hypothesis that the IT 173 installation may have been a sphere of male cultic activity. Of all the plaques from the Inana Temple, the plaque dedicated by Lumma best represents the banqueting and procession iconography typical of Early Dynastic door plaques.

Many of the door plaques from level VIIB were subject to reuse. For example, a total of three door plaque fragments were built into the IT 173 installation. In addition, three door plaque fragments (7 N 104–106) were built into a stone table in IT 176, the part of the courtyard west of sanctuary IT 177/178 (fig. 2). A large fragment from an additional plaque (7 N 112), according to the excavation notes, formed part of a container that was built into the IT 176 table while smaller fragments of the same plaque were found on top of the table. It is unclear whether or not the smaller pieces had been used to form the surface of the table. Another fragmentary door plaque (7 N 252) was used as paving in IT 177.

6 Peg

Level VIIB also yielded the only inscribed example in the Inana Temple of a type of peg (7 N 199) ending in an animal protome (fig. 7). The Inana Temple peg ends in the

²⁹ Zettler 1987, 219.

³⁰ Goetze 1970.

³¹ Asher-Greve 1985, pl. 29, no. 565; Zettler 1992, fig. 6.

head of a bull. The eyes and triangular inset in the forehead would have been inlaid. Perhaps the horns had been attached separately. The peg was among the objects laid out on the benches against the short west wall of sanctuary IT 179 and covered with mud plaster. The inscription is difficult to read.³²



Fig. 7: Nippur, Inana Temple level VIIB, Early Dynastic peg (7 N 199) ending in a bull protome (Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

The shaft of the peg is roughly-hewn. Its diameter is comparable to that of some of the central holes of the Inana Temple door plaques. The shape of the shaft, an oblong rectangle, also resembles the shape of some of the central holes of the door plaques. As discussed above, a peg driven through the center of a door plaque would have secured a cord or hook, which in turn secured a door. If 7 N 199 were driven through the center of a door plaque, only the finished area of the peg would have been visible.

It is plausible therefore to suggest that peg 7 N 199 is essentially a sculpted version of a more functional item retrieved from level VIIB and referred to as a “knob” or “nail” (for example, 7 N 318, 7 N 369). The stone plaque found in the North Temple at Nippur, discussed above, preserved such a knob over its central hole (fig. 6). Hansen³³ noted that the circular mark or depression around the central hole of a few of the Inana Temple plaques may have been made when such a knob was attached to the plaque (fig. 8). The finished area of peg 7 N 199 ends in a similar knob-like shape, and the roughly-hewn shaft has a smaller diameter. Peg 7 N 199 therefore might have left a similar circular mark or depression when driven through the central hole of a plaque.

³² Goetze 1970.

³³ Hansen 1963, 147.



Fig. 8: Nippur, Inana Temple level VIIB, Early Dynastic door plaque (7 N 308) with circular mark or depression (Courtesy of the Nippur Publication Project).

7 Conclusion

The inscribed dedicatory objects from the Inana Temple raise several interrelated issues worth considering. To begin, what is the significance of the lack of inscribed objects in the Inana Temple before level VIII? One possibility is that the appearance of inscribed objects in level VIII signals a functional shift. That is, the archaeological remains in the Inana Temple area had not yet assumed the function of a temple before level VIII. Arguing against this, however, are the plastering practices and installations associated with the central area of the preceding level IX, described above. Wilson,³⁴ however, noted that if level IX did indeed constitute the earliest Inana Temple, the material assemblage did not change from earlier levels. In other words, nothing in the level IX material assemblage would suggest a functional shift to a temple context.

Another possible significance of the lack of inscribed objects in the Inana Temple before level VIII is that the Early Dynastic tradition of dedicating objects to temples does not begin earlier. In the Early Dynastic temples in the Diyala region, however, the stone dedicatory objects common to Early Dynastic temple practices are attested

³⁴ Wilson in Zettler et al. (forthcoming).

in small numbers—albeit uninscribed—from the Early Dynastic I period onwards.³⁵ In Inana Temple level VIII, a small number of the stone dedicatory objects common to Early Dynastic temple practices do appear. Nevertheless, in comparison to the Diyala region, the object typologies common to Early Dynastic dedicatory practices arrive rather late to the Inana Temple at Nippur. This is in marked contrast to the usual observation that the Diyala material culture exhibits a time lag in comparison to southern Mesopotamia.

Karen Wilson³⁶ has also observed that level VIII yielded an increase in amulets, many in the form of reclining quadrupeds. Here it is worthwhile to note that some early ED levels of Diyala temples—pre-dating level VIII of the Inana Temple—also yielded large quantities of amulets (as well as beads and cylinder seals).³⁷ In level VIII of the Inana Temple, a group of objects including shells, beads, amulets, and other objects was found on the floor in the northeast corner of IT 225, which represents the area of the court north of sanctuary IT 223/224.³⁸ Stone vessels, three of which are sculpted, as well as two sculpture fragments (the feet and base of a statue and a head) and two fragmentary relief-carved stone door plaques were also present in IT 225. By association with these Early Dynastic dedicatory objects, it might be inferred that the shells, beads, and amulets were also dedicated. While beads and amulets continue to be attested among level VIIB hoards, the stone dedicatory objects common to Early Dynastic temple practices dominate the hoards associated with the level VIIB central sanctuary area.

Sculpture, door plaques, and pegs are not attested before level VIII, nor are sculpted stone vessels. Plain stone vessels, however, are attested in the Inana Temple before level VIII. None of the pre-level VIII stone vessels are inscribed. Are the pre-level VIII stone vessels nevertheless dedicatory objects? This raises a second issue worth considering when examining the inscribed dedicatory objects from the Inana Temple. Must an object be inscribed in order to be designated a dedicatory object?

In general, inscribed and uninscribed objects retrieved from temples are assumed to have the same significance.³⁹ Statues, plaques, pegs, mace heads, and other objects are designated dedicatory objects on the basis of inscribed examples. In Early Dynastic temples, inscribed and uninscribed objects are generally hoarded and buried indiscriminately with one another. But other object types found in large quantities in temples are not considered dedicatory because no inscribed examples have survived. For example, numerous shell inlays—often of indeterminable function or potentially inlaid into furniture, tableaux, or otherwise—are retrieved from Early Dynastic

³⁵ Delougaz/Hill/Lloyd 1942.

³⁶ Wilson in Zettler et al. (forthcoming).

³⁷ See Delougaz/Lloyd 1942, 136–42 (Khafajah, Sin Temple II, III, and IV); Evans 2012, 177.

³⁸ Zettler 1992, fig. 6; Gibson/Hansen/Zettler 2001, fig. 4.

³⁹ Braun-Holzinger 1991, 2.

temples but are not considered dedicatory objects. In some cases, the dimensions of the inlay from level VIIB of the Inana Temple are similar to or surpass those of some of the sculpture and thus would comprise a competing visual program. Inlay thus forms a major category of imagery in the Inana Temple. Are the Inana Temple inlay, none of which are inscribed, objects of dedication? In a similar vein, regarding the large numbers of stone vessels commonly retrieved from temples, were certain stone vessels dedicated whereas other stone vessels were part of the temple inventory and acquired through other means?

In addition to signaling that an object type is a category of Early Dynastic dedication, the presence of an inscription might signal when an object has been subject to reuse. This was suggested, for example, in the discussion above of the stone vessels set into the level VIIB installations. The inscriptions on these stone vessels would not have been visible once the object was set into the installation. Thus, current scholarship would suggest they are no longer within the phase of their primary purpose.

It is possible, however, that too much emphasis is placed on the inscription when evaluating the life of a dedicatory object within the temple. It is unclear, more generally, whether a dedicatory inscription had to remain visible in the temple once the act of dedication had occurred. It should not be discounted that an inscription may have served its purpose once the object entered the temple. It may not be correct to assume that any great length of time separated the act of dedication from the subsequent use of the vessels in the level VIIB installations.

In terms of visibility, it should be noted that at least one level VIIB stone bowl (7 N 128) was inscribed on the interior and thus would not have been visible when the bowl contained something. In contrast, the one inscribed Inana Temple peg and the stone door plaque dedicated by Lumma suggest that efforts were made in order to place inscriptions in areas that could be considered visible. In both these examples, parts of the object are only roughly finished. These areas, according to our understanding of the function of the object, were not meant to be visible. It was therefore in the visible, finished area in both these instances that the inscription was placed.

Nevertheless, that we might place too much emphasis on the inscription when evaluating the life of a dedicatory object is suggested by some texts which record offerings made by the Early Dynastic queens of Lagash.⁴⁰ We know, for example, that during the malt-eating festival of Nanshe, the Early Dynastic queen Baranamtara made offerings to deities and cultic objects. On two separate occasions, these offerings included eight units of dates and oil for “the statues of the inner room, of which there are eight” (literally “eight of them it is”). That the identity of the represented individual was known in other examples on the same occasion is attested by, for example, a statue identified as that of the ruler Urnanshe of Lagash which also received offerings.

⁴⁰ Evans 2012, 131–137.

Both a royal statue and eight statues potentially uninscribed therefore received offerings from the queen of Lagash.

In the Inana Temple, the evidence for the purposeful selection of stone dedicatory objects as building materials supports the significance of this phase in the life cycle of the object. The IT 173 installation had a stone substructure built from the dedicatory objects of predominantly male donors. The male donors represented by the stone construction materials suggest that such secondary acts of deposition can in fact tell us something about the context from which they were retrieved. As I suggested above, perhaps the IT 173 installation was a sphere of male cultic activity.

As a final issue regarding inscribed dedicatory objects, it should be noted that these objects were subject to reuse beyond that of construction materials, such as in the example of the IT 173 installation. The majority of statues from the Inana Temple have drill holes present at the neck suggesting that heads—or bodies—were easily replaceable.⁴¹ For these and other reasons, we should not assume that the inscription played a continual role in the life cycle of the object. If we are correct in understanding that recycling sculpture, evidenced in the example here of drill holes, meant recycling and reconstructing the human figure for a different donor, then the inscription was truly a material object. That is, the material presence of the inscription was voidable and in a different reiteration of the alān the human image could assume a different identity.

In this respect, the materiality of the dedicatory inscription can be reconciled with modern notions of materiality. Here I mean a consideration both beyond noting the presence and/or absence of an inscription and beyond noting the placement of the inscription. If the Early Dynastic system of dedicating objects is understood as a means of making the donor present in the temple, the life cycle of the object suggests the temporality of this presence. That is, the reuse of dedicatory objects suggests that the presence of the donor comprises just one phase in the larger life cycle of the stone medium from which most of these objects were fashioned.

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41 Evans 2012, 137–143.

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Paola Paoletti

Die Paläographie der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla: Einige erste Betrachtungen

1 Einleitung

Seit ihrem sensationellen Fund 1975/76 ergänzen und erweitern die ca. 15.000 Texte des frühbronzezeitlichen Palastes G von Ebla die Dokumentation über Kultur und Geschichte Syriens und des gesamten Vorderen Orients. Die spektakuläre Entdeckung durch ein italienisches Grabungsteam des ca. 65 km südlich von Aleppo gelegenen Ebla ist nur mit den größeren Ausgrabungen von Städten wie Ur oder Uruk im südlichen Mesopotamien vergleichbar. Es handelt sich um den außergewöhnlichen Fund eines vollständigen Hauptarchivs, das in zwei mit Holzregalen ausgestatteten Räumen neben dem Palasthof lag.¹

Die eblaitischen Schriftzeugnisse umfassen ca. 50 Jahre im 24. Jh. v. Chr. und geben eine reiche Vielfalt von Textgattungen wieder, wie z. B. Alltagsdokumente, literarische Texte und eine größere Anzahl von lexikalischen Listen. Im Mittelpunkt dieses Beitrags steht die letztgenannte Textgattung, denn die lexikalischen Listen

Dieses Projekt wird in Zusammenarbeit mit der Archaeological mission of Tell Mardikh/Ebla und Alfonso Archi der Università di Roma „La Sapienza“ durchgeführt. Insbesondere fand dieser Beitrag im Rahmen des PostDoc-Stipendiums der „Bayerischen Gleichstellungsförderung für Frauen in Forschung und Lehre“ an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München seinen Ursprung. Ohne die Unterstützung von Alfonso Archi hätte er allerdings nicht entstehen können, denn Alfonso Archi hat mir sein umfangreiches Material über die lexikalischen Listen aus Ebla zur Verfügung gestellt und mich in seine Arbeit an den eblaitischen lexikalischen Listen einbezogen: Dafür möchte ich mich zutiefst bedanken. Außerdem bin ich Walther Sallaberger sehr dankbar, da er mehrere Fassungen dieses Beitrages gelesen und mir dazu viele kritische Anmerkungen und Korrekturen gegeben hat. Für anregende Diskussionen während der Abfassung dieses Artikels möchte ich mich zudem bei Alfonso Archi, Frauke Weiershäuser, Elena Devecchi, Armando Bramanti, Angela Greco, Walther Sallaberger und Kamran Zand bedanken. Frau Dr. Susanne Beck hat dankenswerterweise die Korrektur der deutschen Rechtschreibung und Grammatik übernommen. Sehr hilfreiche Mittel für die Arbeit an und mit lexikalischen Listen stellen die online Database DCCLT (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt/>) von Nick Veldhuis und das Sumerian Syllabary (<http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/PSD/html/uniss/UI/oindex.html>) von Miguel Civil dar, wofür ich mich auch entsprechend bedanken möchte. Die Verantwortung für die hier vorgelegten Inhalte übernehme ich selbst.

Neben den Abkürzungen des Reallexikons der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie (http://www.rla.badw.de/Reallexikon/Abkuerzungsverzeichnisse/downloads/Abkuerzungsverzeichnis_Okt2010) werden hier folgende Abkürzungen verwendet: SE für „Sillabario di Ebla“; VE für „Vocabolario di Ebla“; EBK für *eš₂-bar-kin₃*.

1 Vgl. Archi 1993.

spielen für die Rekonstruktion des Verbreitungsprozesses der Keilschrift im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. eine ganz zentrale Rolle.

Die lexikalischen Listen wurden im Hauptarchiv (L.2769) gefunden, das den archäologischen Untersuchungen² zufolge zur Zeit seiner Zerstörung noch genutzt wurde. Das Hauptarchiv L.2769 stellte keinen großen Raum dar, allerdings wurde es entworfen, um drei Holzregale für die Aufbewahrung der Tontafeln aufzunehmen. Diese Holzregale befanden sich auf der nördlichen und der östlichen Seite des Raumes. Sie wurden von zwei oder drei Pfosten gestützt.

Die Zerstörung des Raumes und ein Brand störten den ursprünglichen Zustand der Archive, daher ist es nur für einige wenige Tafelgruppen möglich, die ursprüngliche Position auf den Regalen zu rekonstruieren. Während dies z. B. für viele der monatlichen Abrechnungen für Textilien mit ihrem rechteckigen Format möglich ist, ist die genaue Position der lexikalischen Manuskripte schwerer zu bestimmen. Den Untersuchungen von Archi und Matthiae zufolge, befanden sich die lexikalischen Texte vermutlich in der Nord-Ost-Ecke des Raumes.³

Neben dem Hauptarchiv wurden auch kleinere Archive und verstreute Texte im Palast entdeckt.⁴ Bis zu ihrer Entdeckung 1975 war Keilschrift im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. nur aus dem ca. 1.000 km entfernten Babylonien bekannt. So bergen diese Texte – und dabei vor allem die lexikalischen Listen – die Möglichkeit, den Verbreitungs- und sogar Adaptionsprozess der Keilschrift auf ihrem weiten Weg nach Syrien verfolgen zu können.

Die eblaitischen lexikalischen Listen haben ihren Ursprung in den mesopotamischen Listen, wie sie aus älteren Fundorten wie Uruk, Fāra oder Tell Abū Ṣalābiḥ bekannt sind.⁵ Zudem bilden die Ebla-Texte zusammen mit den altakkadischen Texten

² S. Matthiae 2012, 66–67 mit weiterführenden Literatur.

³ In der Sekundärliteratur ist eine deutliche Entwicklung in der Beschreibung der Tafelverteilung in den Regalen des Archivs L.2769 zu beobachten, anfangend mit Archi 1985, xvi und Matthiae 1986, 62–64, Archi 1995a, 112, Archi 1995b, 122 bis hin zu Archi 2003. Archi 1986a, 83–86 liefert eine genaue Beschreibung der Verteilung der lexikalischen Manuskripte: „The unilingual lexical texts of Mesopotamian origin were found in the same sectors: NB and NC, but either ‘upon the files’ (that is from levels upon the tablets till found arranged in files) or from lev. 1 and 2. Instead, the lexical texts belonging to the series with the incipit ŠĒ.BAR.UNKEN (which was composed at Ebla) come in part also from lev. 3 of NB and NC (...) Also the bilingual lexical texts – both the larger tablets (as A_1 = TM.75.G.2000+; B = 2001+) and the smaller one – were found in front of the North wall, mostly in NB lev. 1 and 2. But for example, the five tablets which constitute manuscript D come from different sectors; that is TM.75.G.1825 (D_5): NA; 1448 (D_3): NA lev. 1; 2284 (D_1) NAb lev. 1; 1426 (D_4) and 1774 (D_2): NCa lev. 1“ (Archi 1986a, 84f.). Darüber hinaus bieten Archi 1996, 73–75 und Archi 2003 eine sehr punktuelle Rekonstruktion der Tafelverteilung, vor allem in Bezug auf die Amtsjahre der Funktionäre. Zur Verteilung der lexikalischen Tafeln auf den Regalen s. v. a. Archi 1986a, 84–85, Archi 1988, Archi 1996, 74–75 und Abb. 1.

⁴ S. zusammenfassend Archi 1986b, Archi 1996 und Matthiae 2012, 69–78.

⁵ Archi 1987a, Civil 1987, Archi 1992, Civil 2008, Civil 2009 sowie Cavigneaux, RIA 6 1980–1983, 612–616 s. v. Lexikalische Listen und Waetzoldt/Cavigneaux, RIA 12 2009, 298 s. v. Schule.

„die frühesten Zeugnisse für die Adaption der Keilschrift zur Wiedergabe einer nicht-sumerischen Sprache“.⁶ Der Prozess der Adaption der Keilschrift für die Wiedergabe von Sprachen über das Sumerische hinaus wurde zuletzt z. B. von Cancik-Kirschbaum folgendermaßen beschrieben:⁷ „The cuneiform script was adapted to various linguistic contexts, as ethnically heterogeneous cultures with their different languages made use of the writing system. This not only resulted in the diffusion of a useful technical tool and the further development of its structural and functional components, but also allowed for the controlled (and often not so controlled) diffusion, dissemination, detachment, and reimplantation of knowledge stored in writing“ und „the creative process associated with the implementation of a written tradition is inevitably linked to process of selection with regard to the existing repertoire of knowledge. [...] we have to allow not only for stimuli and development, but also for experiment, error, invention, and systematic elaboration“.⁸

Dies kann man auch in Ebla mit seiner vielfältigen Textproduktion verfolgen, insbesondere stellen die verschiedenen Gruppen von lexikalischen Listen die wichtigste Quelle für die Rekonstruktion dieses Prozesses dar. Das lexikalische Corpus von Ebla lässt sich folgendermaßen gliedern:

1. Sumerische lexikalische Listen mesopotamischer Tradition.
2. Sumerische lexikalische Listen lokalen eblaitischen Ursprunges.
3. Zweisprachige sumerisch-eblaitische Listen lokalen eblaitischen Ursprunges.

Die sumerischen lexikalischen Listen mesopotamischer Tradition wurden in Ebla von eblaitischen Schreibern so genau kopiert, dass sie nur wenige Varianten im Format sowie in der graphischen oder syllabischen Wiedergabe der Wörter zeigen.⁹ Nach und nach wurden sie, wo erforderlich, für die lokalen Bedürfnisse mit Glossen versehen, die Hilfestellungen für die Aussprache der jeweiligen Zeichen gaben. So wurde in Ebla eine eigene Zeichenliste von 150 Einträgen („Sillabario di Ebla“)¹⁰ geschaffen. Darüber hinaus wurde eine andere einsprachige Liste von Wortzeichen geschaffen, die nach ihrem ersten Eintrag *eš₂-bar-kin*, („die richtige Entscheidung aufsuchen“) genannt wird.¹¹ Diese Liste umfasst über 1.400 Einträge, die akrographisch angeordnet sind und die in Ebla gebräuchlichen Logogramme anführt. In manchen

⁶ Krebern timer 1985, 53.

⁷ S. Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 126. Dazu s. zuletzt auch Veldhuis 2014b, 131. Diese neue Publikation von Veldhuis ist kurz nach Fertigstellung des vorliegenden Beitrags erschienen und konnte daher nur kursorisch berücksichtigt werden.

⁸ S. Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 132.

⁹ Archi 1992, 20–25.

¹⁰ Vgl. Archi 1987b.

¹¹ Die Edition der Rezension A mit einer vorläufigen Rekonstruktion der Rezension B wurde von Picchioni 1997 vorgelegt. Eine neue Rekonstruktion der Rezensionen B, C, D und E wird von Archi (in Vorbereitung) erstellt.

Fassungen von *eš₂-bar-kin₅* wurden schließlich eblaitische Übersetzungen eingefügt, die die sogenannten zweisprachigen Listen bilden und ein außergewöhnliches und frühes Zeugnis der Adaption von Schrift darstellen.¹²

Die Verbreitung der mesopotamischen Keilschrift außerhalb ihres ursprünglichen kulturellen Hintergrunds geht mit der Entwicklung von jeweils eigenem Unterrichtsmaterial einher und kann mit Cancik-Kirschbaum wie folgt beschrieben werden, wenngleich es sich auf die Späte Bronzezeit bezieht: „The process of transmission takes on a special nuance if seen within the vital sphere of cultural contact. The transfer of a writing system together with its didactic material on the one hand, and the transformation of the system in order to adapt it to the concrete needs of the receiving community on the other hand, fostered an awareness of linguistics and grammatical thought. These became explicit not only in translation (bilingual [...] versions of a text), but also in the use of vocabularies [...] and bilingual lexical lists“.¹³ In Bezug auf die sog. zweisprachigen lexikalischen Listen schlägt Archi¹⁴ vor, dass letzte in Ebla nicht nur als Zeicheninventare für das Erlernen der Keilschrift, sondern auch als eine Art „Wörterbücher“ für das Erlernen des Sumerischen verwendet wurden. Dagegen bezeichnet Peust¹⁵ diese sog. zweisprachigen Listen eigentlich nicht als zweisprachig, sondern eher als eine Liste der in Ebla gebrauchten Logogramme mit den entsprechenden phonetischen (eblaitischen) Glossen.

Dennoch weisen die Palastarchive von Ebla kaum „typische“ Schultexte wie diejenigen aus Babylonien auf: Zwar bildeten die lexikalischen Texte in Ebla die Grundlage für die Lehre,¹⁶ allerdings stellten sie kein direktes Unterrichtsmaterial dar. Folgende Unterschiede zur mesopotamischen Schultradition sind zu beobachten:

1. Die lexikalischen Listen aus Ebla stellen Inventare von Sumerogrammen dar, die vergleichbar zu den lexikalischen Listen aus Uruk als Referenzwerke für das Erlernen der Keilschrift und des Sumerischen dienten. Die Palastarchive haben

¹² Diese Listen wurden zunächst von Pettinato 1982 und die Rezension D auch von Conti 1990 publiziert. Wichtige Beiträge zur Deutung bestimmter Passagen haben Krebern timer 1982 und 1983, Conti 1989 und 1990, Sjöberg 1999, 2003a, 2003b und 2004 sowie Bonechi 2007 und 2008 geliefert.

¹³ Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012, 133.

¹⁴ S. Archi 1992, 17.

¹⁵ S. Peust 2014, 135.

¹⁶ Zum Verhältnis der lexikalischen Listen zur Lehre s. u. a. Veldhuis 2006, 187: „The archaic lists were used as instruments to teach the newly invented accounting system, yet their contents suggest that they are also something else [...] In other words, the lexical corpus contains many words and signs that seem superfluous and cannot be explained by the immediate necessities of education“. Außerdem fügt Veldhuis 2006, 187 FN 9 hinzu: „It should be noted, though, that such incongruence between teaching tools and actual writing practice is a constant throughout the history of cuneiform education“ und Veldhuis 2006, 189: „The archaic lexical lists seem to display a drive to be complete, to include every possible item in a certain category – even if it was entirely useless within the administrative system of the time“.

- allerdings kaum Schultexte hervorgebracht, wie sie aus dem frühdynastischen Mesopotamien (oder aus der altbabylonischen Zeit) bekannt sind.¹⁷
2. Die meisten lexikalischen Texte aus Fāra und Tell Abū Ṣalābīḥ stammen aus architektonischen Kontexten, die nicht privaten, sondern eher öffentlichen Charakters (Palast oder Tempel) sind.¹⁸ Allerdings wurden – wenngleich in kleineren Mengen – lexikalische Manuskripte in beiden Fundorten auch verstreut in vielen kleineren Archiven gefunden.¹⁹ Die altbabylonischen Schultexte aus Mesopotamien stammen hingegen meist aus privaten Häusern von Ur, Nippur, Sippar usw. bzw. wurden im Palast von Enlil-bāni in Isin oder im Sin-kāšid-Palast in Uruk gefunden.²⁰ Die eblaitischen lexikalischen Listen stammen bisher nur aus dem Zentralarchiv des königlichen Palastes.²¹
 3. Das lexikalische Corpus von Ebla umfasst sowohl jüngere Listen lokaler Produktion, die dem Erlernen der Keilschrift dienten, als auch die älteren Kopien der sumerischen lexikalischen Listen mesopotamischen Ursprungs. Alle waren im selben Archiv und wie Bibliotheksexemplare zusammen aufbewahrt. Dies wird durch die archäologischen Untersuchungen bestätigt,²² wonach das Hauptarchiv

17 S. Waetzoldt/Cavigneaux, RLA 12 2009, 296–298 s. v. Schule; Zand (im Druck), 21–22.

18 S. dazu Zand (im Druck), 13. Interessant ist in Fāra das sog. „Tafelhaus“ (XVh und nördlich davon) (s. die Zusammenstellung von Zand (im Druck), 8–9 mit weiterführender Literatur), in dem eine große Anzahl lexikalischer Manuskripte zusammen mit Verwaltungstexten, literarischen Werken und Beschwörungen, jedoch keinen linsenförmigen Übungstexten, gefunden wurden. Dies führte Martin 1988, 86 zur Vermutung, dass es sich dabei nicht um eine Schule, sondern eher um eine Bibliothek handle (s. Zand [im Druck], 9 auch mit anderen Interpretationsvorschlägen dieses Fundkontextes). In Bezug auf Tell Abū Ṣalābīḥ vermuten hingegen Krebernik/Postgate 2009, 8, dass es sich bei der Area E sehr wahrscheinlich um einen Tempel handelt. Dort wurden in verschiedenen Räumen die meisten lexikalischen und literarischen Texten von Tell Abū Ṣalābīḥ gefunden, weshalb Rubio 2011, 106 dort von einem vermutlichen Schulkontext ausgeht. S. dazu die Zusammenstellung von Zand (im Druck), 11–13.

19 S. Zand (im Druck), 7–13. In Tell Abū Ṣalābīḥ sind diese kleinere Archive nach Krebernik/Postgate 2009, 8, mit Verweis auf Biggs 1974, 44, allerdings nicht privaten Haushalten zuzuordnen. Da dort sowohl Verwaltungsurkunden als auch einige wenige lexikalische Listen gefunden wurden, meint Krebernik 2009 zudem, dass „one should not think of lexical texts as the sole preserve of scribal training establishments, but more as reference works to be found wherever scribes were at work, as an integral part of any scribal activity“ (Krebernik 2009). In Bezug auf Fāra ist eine klare Deutung der kleineren Fundkontexte noch nicht möglich, dennoch stellen Krebernik/Postgate 2009, 8 fest, dass „It seems that the literate inhabitants of Early Dynastic cities did not confine their activities to temples and/or palaces, but kept their documents at home“. S. dazu Zand (im Druck), 11 mit weiterführender Literatur.

20 S. dazu Volk 2000, 4–6, Waetzoldt/Cavigneaux 2009, 296–297 s. v. Schule und Volk 2011, 282–283.

21 S. jüngst die Zusammenstellung von Zand (im Druck), 13–21.

22 Archi 1995a, 112–113: „La documentazione raccolta nell’Archivio centrale è il risultato di una selezione [...]. Vi sono poi dei centri amministrativi minori, differenziati da loro, ove venivano redatti e talvolta anche trattenuti dei documenti [...]; il fatto che [nel vestibolo sotto il portico orientale (L.2875)] sia stata rinvenuta anche una placchetta di steatite, adatta a levigare superfici in argilla, indica che

L.2769 einen langfristigen Aufbewahrungsort für die Tontafeln darstellte, wohingegen die anderen kleineren Archive des Palastes nur für eine begrenzte Zeit und für bestimmte temporäre administrative Angelegenheiten verwendet wurden.

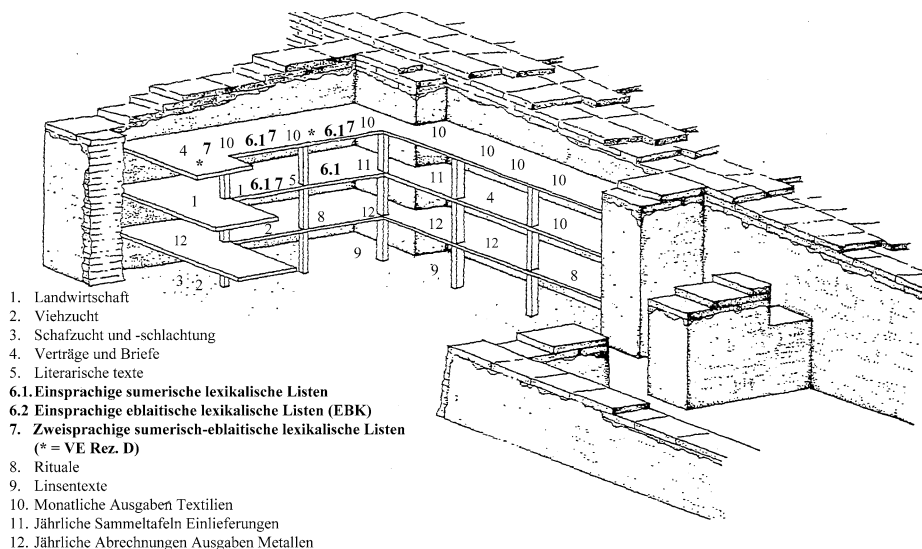


Abb. 1: Archiv L.2769.²⁴

Aus den Unterschriften, den Kolophonen der lexikalischen Listen sind Schreiber namentlich bekannt, die diese lexikalischen Listen verfasst haben. Diese Schreiber sind aber auch als Verfasser administrativer Urkunden bekannt, weshalb letztlich auch die lexikalischen Listen einen Bezug zum Alltag erhalten.

Die in den lexikalischen und administrativen Texten erhaltenen Kolophone liefern allerdings in Bezug auf die Frage nach dem Weg der Keilschrift von Mesopotamien nach Ebla einen entscheidenden Hinweis. Der Kolophon der sumerischen Liste der Tiernamen A (MEE III 47) lautet in der Tat: „in u₄ dumu-nita-dumu-nita dub-sar e₁₁ aš₂-du ma-ri^{ki}“ „als die jungen Schreiber aus Mari heraufkamen“.²⁴

là si redigevano i documenti“. Vergleichbar dazu auch Archi 1986a, 77–78, Archi 1986b, Archi 1993, Matthiae 2012, 81–83.

²³ In Anlehnung an Archi 2003, 33; fett markiert sind die Angaben von Archi 1986a, 84–85 über die Position der lexikalischen Manuskripte.

²⁴ Übersetzung nach Archi 1992, 20. Nach Pettinato 1981, xxviii, und ferner Archi 1992, 20, id. 1995, 121, Waetzoldt/Cavigneaux 2009, 296 s. v. „Schule“, dürfte dumu-nita als Bezeichnung der „(Schreiber)schüler“ in Ebla stehen. Archi 1992, 20 vermutet, dass einige der eblaitischen Schreiber ihre Schreiberausbildung in Mari erhielten, wobei Pettinato 1981, xxvii von einem Besuch der aus Mari stammenden Schreiber in Ebla ausgeht. Dazu vgl. auch Foster 2005, 88: „As for the Semitic names on

Demnach wurde in Ebla die sumerische Keilschrift zuerst wahrscheinlich durch Schreiber aus Mari eingeführt, indem die lexikalischen Texte aus Mesopotamien getreu kopiert worden sind.²⁵

Darüber hinaus kann man sich dem von der Keilschrift(tradition) von Mesopotamien nach Ebla genommenen Weg durch andere indirekte Hinweise nähern, die aus der Untersuchung von Textgattungen, Inhalten sowie der Verbreitung der Texte hervorgehen. Neben den erwiesenen Parallelen mit den Texten aus Fāra und Tell Abū Šalābīḥ könnte die Stadt Kiš in der Verbreitung der Keilschrifttradition in der FD IIIa eine entscheidende Rolle gespielt haben. Seitdem Gelb²⁶ die sog. „Kish Tradition“ erörterte, wurde auf ein gemeinsames semitisches Kulturgut von Tell Abū Šalābīḥ, Kiš und anderen Städten Nordmesopotamiens sowie Ebla immer wieder hingewiesen.²⁷ Jüngst haben Veldhuis²⁸ und Steinkeller²⁹ das Thema nochmals aufgegriffen. Veldhuis hat insbesondere eine Gruppe von lexikalischen Werken hervorgehoben, die „may be labeled the ‚Kiš Corpus‘“³⁰ und „they were to be read and understood in a Semitic dialect“.³¹ Archi³² machte darauf aufmerksam, dass „all these texts are of Sumerian origin, and therefore in this respect, the Semitized Mesopotamian centers were no more than channels of culture, even if some lists may have been rewritten by their school scribes“.³³ In Ebla sind syllabische und unorthographische Kopien der lexikalischen Manuskripten gut belegt, jedoch unterscheidet Veldhuis³⁴ einerseits die sumerischen syllabischen Kopien der lexikalischen Manuskripte (ED Food, ED Cattle, ED Fish)³⁵ und andererseits die semitischen syllabischen Kopien (Practical Vocabulary

the scholarly tablets [of Tell Abū Šalābīḥ], I would like to imagine them as a delegation of students from Kish sent to Sumer, like young Romans to Athens, to master the cultural idiom of the time [...]. It was these same Sumerian educated Kishites and their colleagues who exported their version of Sumerian scholarship to Ebla“.

25 Archi 1992, 20; Sallaberger 2001.

26 S. Gelb 1977 und 1981.

27 S. dafür die von Veldhuis (2014a, 241 FN 2 und 242 FN 4) zusammengestellte Literatur und Steinkeller 2013.

28 Veldhuis 2014a und 2014b, 132.

29 Steinkeller 2013.

30 Veldhuis 2014a, 241. Zum „Kiš Corpus“ gehören nach Veldhuis 2014a, 243 folgende lexikalische Texte: ED Lu E, Names and Professions, Geographic, Animals B, Practical Vocabulary A, Šamaš Hymn.

31 Veldhuis 2014a, 254.

32 S. Archi 1987a, 128.

33 Für einen Kontakt zwischen Ebla und Kiš spricht, neben den zahlreichen Belegen dieser Stadt in den eblaitischen Texten (Archi 1981 und 1987a), auch die Anwesenheit eines Schreibers namens Išma-Il in der Ebla-Kanzlei, der als „Schreiber aus Kiš“ in dem Kolophon eines mathematischen Textes (MEE III 73 = TM.75.G.1693) bezeichnet wird. Allerdings war Mari der direkte Kontaktpunkt zwischen Mesopotamien und Ebla, s. dazu Archi 1987a, 131; Archi 1992, 20; und Sallaberger 2001. Zur Lokalisierung von Kiš s. jüngst Pomponio 2013.

34 S. Veldhuis 2014a, 257.

35 Für die Literatur zu den jeweiligen Listen s. Veldhuis 2014a, 257 FN 56 und passim.

A, ED Geographic, Šamaš Hymn). Daneben betont Veldhuis, dass „[the] unorthographic versions of traditional (Sumerian) lists demonstrate that at Ebla these lists were indeed read in Sumerian and that the Ebla scribes did their best to understand the pronunciation of the Sumerian words. Conversely, the existence of syllabic Semitic versions of Practical Vocabulary A, the Geography list and the Šamaš hymn should lead to the conclusion that these compositions were to be understood in Semitic“.³⁶ So lassen sich nach Veldhuis³⁷ in Ebla drei Schichten lexikalischer Tradition beobachten, die die oben genannte Gliederung der lexikalischen Listen widerspiegelt:

Tab. 1: Die lexikalische Tradition in Ebla (nach Veldhuis 2014a, 258–259).

a. Die gemeinsame Tradition vom archaischen Uruk, vertreten durch lexikalische Manuskripte wie z. B. ED Lu A, Animals A und Birds.	≡ 1.
b. Die regionale Kiš-Tradition, vertreten durch die lexikalischen Manuskripten des „Kiš Corpus“ (z. B. Animals B, Geographic, ED Lu E).	
c. Eine lokale eblaitische Tradition, vertreten durch die lexikalischen Manuskripte lokaler eblaitischer Produktion (wie z. B. EBK, SE und VE).	≡ 2. und 3.

Die Untersuchung der graphischen Entwicklung der Keilschriftzeichen in den verschiedenen lexikalischen Traditionen von Ebla soll nun diesen Prozess der Verbreitung der Keilschrift von Mesopotamien nach Syrien und ihre Adaption für das semitische Kulturgut noch näher beleuchten.

2 Forschungsstand

Die Paläographie der frühdynastischen Keilschrift beruht auf den grundlegenden Arbeiten von Thureau-Dangin,³⁸ Deimel³⁹ und Rosengarten.⁴⁰ Bisher wurde jedoch die graphische Entwicklung der eblaitischen Keilschriftzeichen seit der Entdeckung der Palastarchive noch nicht systematisch untersucht.

Edzard⁴¹ lieferte zunächst eine vorläufige Ebla-Zeichenliste anhand von ausgewählten Verwaltungsurkunden. Dieser verzichtete auf einen Vergleich mit Zeichenformen in den lexikalischen Listen und fast vollkommen auf paläographische

³⁶ S. Veldhuis 2014a, 257 und 2014b, 131.

³⁷ Veldhuis 2014a, 258–259.

³⁸ Thureau-Dangin 1898.

³⁹ Deimel 1922.

⁴⁰ Rosengarten 1967.

⁴¹ S. Edzard 1981, 145–168.

Diskussionen. Ebenfalls nur vorläufig ist eine Zeichenliste der einsprachigen lexikalischen Listen aus Ebla von P. Mander⁴² erstellt worden. Einige erste paläographische Beobachtungen der Keilschrift von Ebla haben zudem Picchioni⁴³ und Sollberger⁴⁴ vorgelegt. Sallaberger⁴⁵ konnte anhand ausgewählter Beispiele aus datierten Verwaltungsurkunden eine vorläufige paläographische Einordnung bestimmen und den Adaptionsprozess der Keilschrift nachweisen. Schließlich bietet Catagnoti⁴⁶ eine Liste der in den eblaitischen Verwaltungsurkunden gebrauchten Zeichen. Diese setzt sich zum Ziel, weder das Problem der diachronischen Verteilung der Verwaltungsurkunden, noch jenes des *Duktus* der jeweiligen Schreiber anzugehen. Ferner verzichtet sie auch chronologisch auf paläographische Diskussionen, so soll diese Liste ein handliches und synthetisches Arbeitsmittel für die an den eblaitischen Texten Interessierten darstellen.⁴⁷

3 Tafelformat

Archi⁴⁸ zeigte, dass die lexikalischen Manuskripte aus Ebla hauptsächlich zwei unterschiedliche Tafelformate aufweisen:

1. Rechteckige Keilschrifttafeln mit meist einem kalligraphischen Duktus; die Keilschriftzeichen bedecken nicht die ganzen Fächer, so dass Teile der Oberfläche frei von Keilen bleiben (z. B. TM.75.G.2586 = MEE III, 3+4).
2. Eher runde, kleinere Tontafeln mit meist einem einfacheren, groben Duktus; die Fächer sind kleiner und fast ganz mit den Zeichen gefüllt, so dass weniger Oberfläche frei bleibt (z. B. TM.75.G.1400 = MEE III, 62).

Darüber hinaus hat er nach inhaltlichen Eigenschaften eine relative Reihenfolge der Redaktion der verschiedenen Listen zusammengestellt. Er konnte dabei feststellen, dass das rechteckige Format (Nr. 1) den Listen mesopotamischer Tradition und das runde Format (Nr. 2) den lokalen eblaitischen Kopien dieser Listen entspricht. Archi⁴⁹ beobachtete außerdem: „the lexical and literary manuscripts of Mesopotamian origin

⁴² In Pettinato 1981, 285–382.

⁴³ S. Picchioni 1981.

⁴⁴ S. Sollberger 1982.

⁴⁵ S. Sallaberger 2001.

⁴⁶ S. Catagnoti 2013.

⁴⁷ Catagnoti 2013, 4: „La presente paleografia non si propone di affrontare né il problema della distribuzione diacronica dei testi amministrativi e di cancelleria né quello della grafia personale. Piuttosto, essa intende fornire un primo strumento di lavoro, agile e sintetico, pensato per assistere chi pubblica i testi di Ebla o chi li studia [...]“.

⁴⁸ Archi 1992, 20–21.

⁴⁹ S. Archi 1992, 20.



Abb. 2: TM.75.G.1415 Vs. und TM.75G.1636 Vs.



Abb. 3: TN.75.G.2004+ Vs.

look rather archaic because the scribes tended to keep also the external features of their originals. But when the scribes wanted to write a cursive copy, they used smaller round tablets with smaller and not calligraphic signs“. Die verschiedenen Rezensionen der Liste der Vogelnamen gelten dafür als beispielhaft (s. Abb. 2): Rez. A = TM.75.G.1415 = MEE III 39 Taf. IX–X (rechteckig) und Rez. B = TM.75.G.1636 = MEE III 40 Taf. XI (rund).

Schließlich, „when they wrote lists created by their own school, they used rather larger and thinner tablets with narrow columns and smaller cases“. ⁵⁰ Beispielhaft dafür sind die breiten Tafeln des VE (s. Abb. 3, z. B. VE Rez. B = TM.75.G.2004+ = MEE IV 11 Taf. XIV–XV).

4 Die Paläographie der lexikalischen Listen von Ebla: Voraussetzungen und Methode

In seiner Studie untersuchte Sallaberger, wie schon erwähnt, die graphische Entwicklung der Zeichen anhand datierter Verwaltungsurkunden des Palastarchivs G. Die ausgewählten Texte deckten die Laufzeit der Archive, d. h. ca. 50–60 Jahre im 24. Jahrhundert v. Chr. ab. Seine paläographische Studie erfolgte nach einer Einteilung in fünf Perioden, in denen sich jedoch eine klare Zäsur herausbildete und in zwei Hauptphasen trennte. Diese Zäsur ist in den Texten zu sehen, die in die beginnende Amtszeit des Ministers Ibriums datieren, d. h. gleichzeitig mit der Herrschaft des letzten Königs von Ebla Iš'ar-Damu, und kann folgendermaßen zusammengefasst werden:⁵¹

Tab. 2: Paläographische Phasen (nach Sallaberger 2001).

Phase	Texte	Duktus
I	Frühe Texte, bis zur Amtszeit von ArruLUM	– der Griffel ist ganz spitz, so dass sich schmale Keile ergeben – die Zeichen füllen nicht die Fächer, so dass sich freie unbeschriebene Flächen um die Zeichen und eine glattere Oberfläche ergeben
II	Jüngere Texte, ab Ibrium bis Ibbi-zikir	– es werden dickere Griffel verwendet, die kräftigere Keile ergeben – die Zeichen füllen die Fächer auf, so dass die Oberfläche mit breiteren Keilen weitgehend bedeckt ist

Natürlich können ältere Zeichenformen auch in jüngeren Texten auftauchen, besonders am Anfang langer Texte oder wenn ein Zeichen allein in einem Register steht.

⁵⁰ S. Archi 1992, 20–21.

⁵¹ Vgl. Sallaberger 2001.

Aus der Untersuchung der graphischen Entwicklung der Zeichen durch Sallaberger⁵² können folgende Schlussfolgerungen hergeleitet werden:

1. Die Zeit des Amtsbeginns von Ibrium und damit auch die Zeit um den Regierungsantritt des letzten Herrschers Iš'ar-Damu zeigen sich als kritischer Zeitpunkt in der Schriftentwicklung. Diese entspricht der Grenze zwischen Phase I und II, d. h. dem Beginn einer lokalen Entwicklung des typischen *Duktus* von Ebla, die von der babylonischen Tradition unabhängig erfolgt.
2. Da die Texte der Phase I einheitlich dieselben Zeichenformen gebrauchen, die in höherem Maße dem Babylonischen entsprechen, vermutet man, dass die Einführung der Keilschrift nicht sehr lange vor den ältesten in den Archiven erhaltenen Texten erfolgt ist, d. h. wohl zur Zeit Kun-Damus.
3. Die Entwicklung eines lokalen Duktus steht im Zusammenhang mit dem Rückgang der mariotischen Vorherrschaft über Ebla.

Die lexikalischen Texte wurden aber zusammen mit den literarischen und administrativen Texten von derselben kleinen Gruppe von Schreibern in Ebla verfasst.⁵³ Dies wird am Beispiel des namentlich bekannten Schreibers Tira-il ersichtlich, denn dieser hat den Hamazi-Brief (ARET XIII 3) ebenso wie eine einsprachige sumerische Wortliste (Liste C und E = MEE III 47, 50), eine Redaktion der Liste der geographischen Namen (MEE III 56) und literarische Texte wie Beschwörungen (ARET V 20–21) geschrieben. Somit konnte Sallaberger die Verwaltungsurkunden mit den literarischen und lexikalischen Texten in einem Ausblick seiner Studie paläographisch vergleichen und stellte Folgendes fest:

4. Die Schrift weist in lexikalischen und literarischen Texten ebenso Veränderungen in der Keil- und Zeichenform auf, die sich vermutlich parallel zu jenen der Verwaltungsurkunden entwickelten.

Mit der Untersuchung der graphischen Entwicklung von ausgewählten Keilschriftzeichen in den lexikalischen Listen von Ebla geht dieser Beitrag nun auf diesen letzten Punkt näher ein.

Die Auswahl der hier behandelten Zeichen lehnt sich zum einen an jene von Sallaberger⁵⁴ und zum anderen an beispielhafte Zeichenpaare an, die in der frühdynastischen Keilschrifttradition aus Mesopotamien graphisch noch differenziert werden. Diese Studie ergibt sich aus einer umfassenden Untersuchung der Keilschriftzeichen der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla, die die Erstellung einer paläographischen Zeichenliste zum Ziel hat.⁵⁵ Letztere – und somit auch dieser Beitrag – basiert auf zentralen

⁵² S. Sallaberger 2001.

⁵³ S. Sallaberger 2001, 443.

⁵⁴ S. Sallaberger 2001.

⁵⁵ Paoletti (in Vorbereitung).

Manuskripten aus dem Palastarchiv von Ebla, die den drei oben genannten Gruppen lexikalischer Texte angehören: Einsprachige sumerische Listen mesopotamischen bzw. eblaitischen Ursprungs und zweisprachige sumerisch-eblaitische Listen.

Die Einordnung der lexikalischen Manuskripte in den von Sallaberger ermittelten paläographischen Phasen erfolgt zunächst nach einem Gruppentyp: Als „frühe“ Manuskripte werden die einsprachigen sumerischen lexikalischen Listen mesopotamischen Ursprungs zusammengefasst, während die lexikalischen Listen eblaitischen Ursprungs (EBK, VE und SE) als „spätere“ Manuskripte gelten.

Danach werden die Informationen aus den verfügbaren Kolophonen einbezogen, die den Namen des Schreibers einer Tafel angeben und sich somit gegebenenfalls – wie beim Schreiber Tira-II – in die Amtszeit eines bestimmten Ministers datieren lassen. Schließlich wird eine relative Reihenfolge der lexikalischen Manuskripte herangezogen, die von Archi⁵⁶ aufgrund inhaltlicher und redaktioneller Merkmale herausgearbeitet wurde. Zusammengefasst sehen die Kriterien der Einordnung der lexikalischen Manuskripte in den paläographischen Phasen folgendermaßen aus:

- Gruppentyp (mesopotamisch, eblaitisch), Tafelformat.
- Schreiber (und somit auch die Datierung in eine bestimmte Amtszeit, wenn verfügbar).
- Redaktionelle und inhaltliche Reihenfolge

Aus diesen Kriterien ergibt sich zunächst folgende Einordnung der lexikalischen Manuskripte:

Tab. 3: Einordnung der lexikalischen Manuskripte.⁵⁷

	Phase I – Übergang zu Phase II	Phase II	Späte Phase II
Minister	Darmia, Tir, ArruLUM	Ibrium bis Ibbi-zikir	
König	Igriš-ḫalab, Irkab-Damu	Iš'ar-Damu	
Listen- gruppe	sumerische einsprachige Listen mesopotamischen Ursprungs (rechteckige Tafeln)	– lokale eblaitische Kopien der sumerischen einsprachigen Listen (eher runde Tafeln) – sumerische einsprachige Listen lokalen eblaitischen Ursprungs (EBK, SE) – zweisprachige sumerisch-eblaitische Listen (VE)	

⁵⁶ S. Archi (in Vorbereitung) und 1992.

⁵⁷ Die Bezeichnung der Manuskripte entspricht weitestgehend jener von Archi 1992. Abweichend davon: List of Animals A = „List of Domestic Animals“ in Archi 1992, 5; List of Animals B Rez. A = „List of Animals Rez. D“, List of Animals B Rez. B = „List of Animals Rez. E“, List of Animals B Rez. C = „List of Animals Rez. C“, List of Animals B Rez. D = „List of Animals Rez. A“ und List of Animals B Rez. E = „List of Animals Rez. B“ in Archi 1992, 6; VE Rez. A1 = „VE Rez. A2“ in Archi 1992, 17–19. Für EBK Rez. B, C, D und E s. Archi (in Vorbereitung).

	Phase I – Übergang zu Phase II	Phase II	Späte Phase II
Listen	List of Animals B (Rez. A, B[Tira-II?])	List of Animals B (Rez. C)	List of Animals B (Rez. D, E)
	List of Animals A (Rez. A[Azi])	List of Animals A (Rez. B)	
	List of Birds A[Azi]	List of Birds (Rez. B)	
	ED Lu A (Rez. A[Azi], B[Abu-malik])	ED Lu A (Rez. C[Bu-da-BE], D)	
	ED Lu E (Rez. A)	ED Lu E (Rez. B)	
	List of geographical Names[Tira-II]		
		EBK (Rez. A)	EBK (Rez. B, C, D, E)
		SE (Rez. A)	SE (Rez. B)
		VE (Rez. C, D, A)	VE (Rez. B, A1)

Diese Verteilung soll allerdings zunächst nur als Ausgangspunkt gelten, der im Laufe der paläographischen Untersuchung präzisiert und gegebenenfalls korrigiert werden kann. Denn z. B. viele der sumerischen einsprachigen Listen mesopotamischen Ursprunges rechteckigen Formats wurden von Tira-II oder Azi geschrieben, die in die Zeit der Könige Igrīš-ḫalab und Irkab-Damu anzusetzen sind.⁵⁸ Obwohl diese Manuskripte redaktionell und vom Format her als frühe Texte gelten, treten bei diesen beiden Schreibern stellenweise bereits einige paläographische Innovationen auf, die dann typisch für den eblaitischen *Duktus* sein werden.

⁵⁸ Gemäß des Ḥamazi-Briefes ist Tira-il Zeitgenosse Irkab-Damus. Azi wird wegen des Kolophons auf MEE III 556 allgemein älter als Tira-il angenommen. Allerdings hat Sallaberger 2001, 443 auf die Diskrepanz durch die paläographischen Evidenz hingewiesen.

5 Erste paläographische Beobachtungen

Im Folgenden werden beispielhaft die Eigenschaften der Zeichen KA^{59} und DU in den lexikalischen Texten aus Ebla gezeigt, denn sie gelten als einige der wichtigsten Zeichen für die Ermittlung einer paläographischen Entwicklung.⁶⁰

Tab. 4: KA in Phase I.

		
Animals B Rez. A 75 Vs. iv 15	ED Lu E Rez. A 160 Vs. viii 14	Geographic 87 Vs. iv 18
		
Birds Rez. A 86 Vs. v 14	ED Lu A Rez. A 52 Vs. iii 14 ($\text{KA} \times \text{ŠE}_3\text{-tenû}$)	ED Lu A Rez. B 52 Vs. iii 14 ($\text{KA} \times \text{ŠE}_3\text{-tenû}$)

KA in der Phase I ist allgemein sehr kalligraphisch geschrieben. Die eingeschriebenen Keile des Mundbereiches sind haarfein und relativ zahlreich, sie setzen womöglich am Kopf oder an den oberen Waagerechten an. Der untere waagerechte Keil und der erste senkrechte Keil des Kopfes sind jeweils nach oben und nach rechts leicht geneigt. Der Kopf ist noch nicht ganz offen. Vgl. z. B. die Manuskripte der Liste Geographic, Animals B Rez. A und Birds Rez. A.

Tab. 5.1: KA in Phase II.

				
Animals B Rez. C 68 Vs. iv 11	ED Lu E Rez. B 11 Vs. ii 3	EBK Rez. A 164 Vs. v 18	VE Rez. C 171 Vs. vi 5	VE Rez. A Vs. v 24'
				
ED Lu A Rez. C 52 Vs. iv 10 ($\text{KA} \times \text{ŠE}_3\text{-tenû}$)	ED Lu A Rez. D 52 Vs. iv 6 ($\text{KA} \times \text{ŠE}_3\text{-tenû}$)	Animals B Rez. D 146 Vs. vii 14	Animals B Rez. E 66 Vs. iii 22	

⁵⁹ Bei KA wird zur Ergänzung auch das Zeichen $\text{KA} \times \text{ŠE}_3\text{-tenû}$ herangezogen.

⁶⁰ Vgl. Sallaberger 2001, 442 unter DU .

Tab. 5.2: KA in Phase II.

 VE Rez. D1 173 Rs. vi 9	 VE Rez. D3 375 Vs. iv 7	 VE Rez. D5 661 Vs. v 23	 VE Rez. B Vs. vi 3
 VE Rez. D2 229 Vs. iii 9	 VE Rez. D4 532 Rs. ii 5	 VE Rez. D5 702 Vs. viii 7	 VE Rez. A1 Vs. vii 14

KA in der Phase II ist gröber geschrieben: Die Keile sind allgemein dicker und die haarfeinen Keile des Körpers sind kräftigeren Keilen gewichen; sie setzen an den oberen langen Waagerechten an (vgl. die Manuskripte des VE Rez. B, A1 sowie D4).

DU gilt als einer der wichtigsten Zeichen für die Trennung zwischen Phase I und II: Charakteristisch ist das Verhältnis der beiden Keile links vor der abschließenden Senkrechten.⁶¹

Tab. 6: DU in Phase I.

 ED Lu A Rez. A 75 Vs. iv 18	 ED Lu A Rez. B 75 Vs. iv 18	 ED Lu E Rez. A 201 Vs. x 15
 Birds Rez. A 76 Vs. v 4	 Geographic 96 Vs. v 4	

In den früheren Texten weist DU kaum oder nur eine geringe Abweichung im unteren Winkel auf, siehe z. B. die Manuskripte der Liste ED Lu A Rez. A, Birds Rez. A und Geographic, die eher ein älteres DU wiedergeben.

Tab. 7.1 und 7.2: DU in Phase II.

 Animals B Rez. C 51 Vs. iii 13	 ED Lu E Rez. B 56 Rs. iii 6	 EBK Rez. A 363 Vs. ix 36	 VE Rez. C 248 Vs. viii 34	 Animals B Rez. D 178 Vs. ix 2	 Syll Rez. B 92 Rs. iv 11
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⁶¹ S. Sallaberger 2001, 442.

 ED Lu A Rez. C 75 Rs. ii 5	 ED Lu A Rez. D 75 Vs. v 4'	 Birds Rez. B 10 Vs. ii 4	 VE Rez. A Rs. xv 40	 Animals B Rez. E 178 Rs. ii 2	
 VE Rez. D1 39 Vs. iii 12	 VE Rez. D3 362 Vs. iii 2	 VE Rez. D5 591 Vs. ii 10	 VE Rez. B Vs. x 23'		
 VE Rez. D2 277 Rs. i 9	 VE Rez. D4 501 Vs. v 13	 VE Rez. D5 703 Vs. viii 6	 VE Rez. A1 Vs. iv 8		

In der Phase II weist DU einen stärkeren Knick auf und die schrägen Keile vor dem letzten senkrechten laufen fast parallel. So z. B. die Manuskripte des VE Rez. A1, Rez. D2 und Rez. D5 Zeile 591.

Diese ersten Beobachtungen der Zeichen in den lexikalischen Listen stimmen im Allgemeinen mit denen von Sallaberger⁶² für die Verwaltungsurkunden sowie mit der relativen Reihenfolge von Archi⁶³ überein:

1. Die einsprachigen sumerischen lexikalischen Texte können paläographisch ältere Manuskripte der Phase I aufweisen und erweisen sich somit als der mesopotamischen Tradition näherstehend.
2. Die lokalen Listen *eš₂-bar kin₅*, das Syllabar und die zweisprachigen Texte (das Vocabolario di Ebla) sowie die lokalen eblaitischen Kopien der mesopotamischen Originale gehören hingegen zur Phase II. Ihre früheren Vertreter sind vermutlich in den ersten Jahren der Amtszeit vom Minister Ibrium oder am Ende der Amtszeit von ArruLUM anzusetzen.
3. Diese Verteilung ist allerdings nicht immer strikt gehalten, denn ältere Zeichenformen können auch in jüngeren Texten vorkommen. Folglich zeigt sich ein eher homogener Verlauf zwischen den typisch mesopotamischen Manuskripten der Phase I und der eher späteren lokalen eblaitischen Produktion.

⁶² S. Sallaberger 2001, 444.

⁶³ S. Archi 1992.

6 Zeicheninventar und Identifikation

Indem man die graphische Entwicklung eines Zeichens in den lexikalischen Texten genau betrachtet, ist es möglich, den Verbreitungs- und Adaptionsprozess der Keilschrift für Nordsyrien zu verfolgen.

Keilschrift diente zunächst der Wiedergabe des primär logographischen Sumerischen und wurde stark davon beeinflusst.⁶⁴ Bei der Adaption der Keilschrift an das stark unterschiedliche Akkadische fand eine vervollkommnende Ausdehnung der Lautwerte der Zeichen statt, die eine Übertragung auf weitere Sprachen ermöglichte. Zur Keilschriftkultur gehören zahlreiche, auch untereinander stark unterschiedliche, Sprachen und die Keilschrift verdankt diese weite Verbreitung unter anderem den lexikalischen Listen, denn diese Texte stellen einen Versuch dar, die gesamte Welt zu erfassen. So fanden sie ihren praktischen Nutzen in der Institution der Schulen und wurden vom Anfang der Keilschriftkultur an (ca. 3200 v. Chr.) über 600 Jahre hinweg abgeschrieben.⁶⁵

Darüber hinaus bieten die in den lexikalischen Texten von Ebla angebotenen Glossen und mesopotamischen Parallelen die Möglichkeit, Zeichen zu identifizieren und ihre unterschiedlichen Lesungen zu bestimmen. Dies erkannten etwa Kienast und Waetzoldt: „Das Textmaterial aus Ebla ist weitaus reichhaltiger und vielseitiger als die gleichzeitigen mesopotamischen Texte. Daher konnte bereits mithilfe der Ebla-Texte manches Problem aus den Fara- und Abu Šalabikh-Texten gelöst werden. Erinnerung sei nur an Exemplare des ‚Atlante Geografico‘ aus Ebla oder die ‚Names and Professions List‘, welche die Lesung vieler Zeichen in den mesopotamischen Paralleltexten ermöglicht haben“.⁶⁶ Im Folgenden soll dies mit einigen Beispielen illustriert werden:

1. BAḪAR₂ vs. EDIN.

In den Texten aus Fāra und Tell Abū Šalābiḥ werden diese beiden Zeichen graphisch differenziert. Sie entsprechen jeweils LAK-742 (BAḪAR₂) und LAK-747 (EDIN).⁶⁷ Die Differenzierung liegt dabei am Ende des Zeichenkörpers: BAḪAR₂ endet mit einer hohlen V-Form, während EDIN eine mit waagerechten Keilen gefüllte Raute (wie ein „KI“) aufweist. In der sich anschließenden Tabelle werden beide Zeichen nach Krebbernik⁶⁸ aufgeführt:

⁶⁴ S. dazu (Auswahl) Nissen/Damerow/Englund 1993, Steinkeller 1995, Glassner 2000, Selz 2000, Wilcke 2002, Krebbernik 2007, Sallaberger 2009.

⁶⁵ Volk 2000, 3: „Der Zusammenhang von Schriftlichkeit und Schule als Schriftzeichen und deren Inhalte vermittelnde Institution hat von Anbeginn des Schreibens an als Voraussetzung zu gelten“.

⁶⁶ S. Kienast/Waetzoldt 1990, 77.

⁶⁷ Zu den Zeichenformen S. Sallaberger 1996, 3 FN 3 mit weiterführender Literatur, v. a. jedoch Waetzoldt 1971, Bauer 1972, 71 und Bauer 1973–1974, 10. Zu EDIN und BAḪAR₂ in Ebla s. Conti 1990, 45–47.

⁶⁸ S. Krebbernik 1998, 283.

Tab. 8: LAK-742 und LAK-747 (nach Krebernik 1998, 283).

LAK-742	LAK-747
	

Diese beiden Zeichenformen sind im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla mehrmals belegt,⁶⁹ allerdings werden sie nicht systematisch wie in Fāra und Tell Abū Šalābīh differenziert.⁷⁰

- a. Bezüglich BAḤAR₂ sind zunächst folgende Belege besonders aussagekräftig, weil sie /baḥar/ mit der Deutung „Töpfer“ registrieren:
- ED Lu A 125 mit /baḥar/ im Rahmen von Berufsbezeichnungen.
 - EBK/VE 1012, wo /baḥar/ mit *wa-zi-lu-um* /wāširum/ übersetzt wird und dem ug. *yāširūma*, hebr. *yōšēr* „Töpfer“ einzuordnen ist.⁷¹

Neben LAK-742 und LAK-747 begegnet man im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla auch dem Zeichen BAR+LAK742:

69 Hohle V-Form: 'ED lu A Rez. A 125 = TM.75.G.1398+ Vs. vii 11'; ED lu A Rez. C 125 = TM.75.G.1312+ Rs. v 11; ED lu E Rez. A 61 = TM.75. G.1951 Vs. iii 19; EBK Rez. A 326a = TM.75.G.2422+ Vs. ix 3; EBK Rez. A 1012a–1013a = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. xi 36–37; VE Rez. C 326a = TM.75.G.3171 Vs. xi 6; VE Rez. D 326 = TM.75.G.1774 Rs. vi 6; **gefüllte V-Form:** ED lu A Rez. B 125 = TM.75.G.2586+ Vs. vii 11; ED lu A Rez. D 125 = TM.75.G.1398+ Rs. iv 7; ED lu E Rez. B 40 = TM.75.G.1488 Rs. ii 1; SE Rez. A 55 = TM.75.G.1385 Vs. v 5; SE Rez. B 55 = TM.75.G.1907+12680 Vs. vii 1; Animals B Rez. E 51 = TM.75.G.10025 Vs. iii 7; VE Rez. C 1012–1013 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. xv 39–40; VE Rez. A 326a = TM.75.G.2000+ Vs. ix 40; VE Rez. A1 1155 = TM.75.G.10023+ Vs. iv 26; **hohle Rauten-Form:** EBK Rez. A 807 = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. vi 21; VE Rez. C 632 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. iv 35; VE Rez. C 807 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. x 1; VE Rez. A 1012 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. xvii 9; VE Rez. B 790 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. ii 2; VE Rez. B 807 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. ii 27; VE Rez. B 1245 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. xvi 28; **gefüllte Rauten-Form:** Animals B Rez. D 51 = TM.75.G.10005 Vs. iii 7; SE Rez. A 56 = TM.75.G.1385 Vs. v 6; EBK Rez. B 326a = TM.75.G.10020+ Vs. x 9; EBK Rez. B 632 = TM.75.G.10020+ Vs. xv 20; VE Rez. A 632 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. iv 15; VE Rez. A 790 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. ix 41; VE Rez. A 1013 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. xvii 11; VE Rez. D 790 = TM.75.G.1825 Rs. iv 3; VE Rez. B 1012–1013 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. viii 40, 42; VE Rez. B 1247–1248 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. xvi 32–33; 'VE Rez. A1 1245 = TM.75.G.10023+ Vs. x 6'; 'VE Rez. A1 1246b = TM.75.G.10023+ Vs. x 8'; 'VE Rez. A1 1247 = TM.75.G.10023+ Vs. x 10'; VE Rez. A1 1342 = TM.75.G.10023+ Rs. iii 25.

Unklar bleibt die Zeichenform bei folgenden Belegen: 'SE Rez. B 56 = TM.75.G.1907+12680 Vs. vii 3'; 'VE Rez. A 807 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. x 24'; 'VE Rez. D 304 = TM.75.G.1774 Rs. iv 9' (edin); 'VE Rez. D 807 = TM.75.G.1825 Rs. v 11'; 'VE Rez. B 632 = TM.75.G.2001+ Vs. xviii 25'; 'VE Rez. A1 1248 = TM.75.G.10023+ Vs. x 12'; [VE Rez. C 790 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. ix 21] (edin); [Animals B Rez. D 55 = TM.75.G.10005 Vs. iii 11] (edin); [Animals B Rez. E 55 = TM.75.G.10025 Vs. iii 11] (edin); [ED lu E Rez. A 40 = TM.75. G.1951 Vs. ii 19] (baḥar₂); [ED lu E Rez. B 61 = TM.75.G.1488 Rs. iv 1].

70 Vgl. dazu Catagnoti 2013, 52 Nr. 292 und Nr. 293, wonach LAK-742 (mit Lesung baḥar₂) und LAK-747 (mit Lesung edin) in den Verwaltungsurkunden aus Ebla graphisch differenziert wurden (allerdings ohne Belege).

71 S. dazu Krebernik 1983, 35.

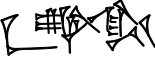
- EBK Rez. A 1013 mit dem Zeichen BAR+LAK-742.
- EBK/VE 326, wo BAR+LAK-742 für eine Lesung baḥar₄ spricht, jedoch inhaltlich noch unklar bleibt.⁷²

Die Tabellen 9 und 10 zeigen die Zeichenformen von LAK-742 und LAK-747 in ED Lu A und EBK/VE.

Tab. 9: LAK-742 und LAK-747 in ED Lu A (Zeichnungen der Autorin).

	Rez. A	Rez. B	Rez. C	Rez. D
ED Lu A 125 /baḥar/ BAR+				

Tab. 10: LAK-742 und LAK-747 in EBK/VE (Zeichnungen der Autorin).

	326 /baḥar/	1012–1013 /baḥar/
EBK Rez. A	 BAR+	 BAR+
VE Rez. C		
VE Rez. D	 BAR+	—
VE Rez. A		
VE Rez. B	—	
EBK Rez. B		—

⁷² S. dazu Conti 1990, 119.

Aus diesen Tabellen wird Folgendes ersichtlich:

- /baḥar/ wird sowohl mit LAK-742 als auch mit LAK-747 geschrieben, d. h. mit hohler oder gefüllter V-Form bzw. mit hohler oder gefüllter Raute am Ende des Körpers.
- Das mesopotamische Manuskript ED Lu A Rez. B 125 schreibt das Zeichen für baḥar₂ mit einer gefüllten V-Form am Ende des Körpers, d. h. eigentlich einem „EDIN“ nach den Differenzierungskriterien der Fāra/TAS-Tradition.

b. Für EDIN sind diese Belege besonders aussagekräftig:

- ED Lu E 61 Rez. A, wo edin in der Zeichenkombination A.EDIN = ummu_x mit BAR+LAK-742 (mit einer hohlen V-Form am Ende des Körpers) geschrieben wird.
- EBK/VE 790 mit an-edin-aka = te-ri₂-iṣ-du, das nach Conti⁷³ als „ackern“ (it. „coltivare“) zu deuten ist und mit einer hohlen oder gefüllten Raute geschrieben wird.
- EBK/VE 807, wo edin ebenfalls mit einer hohlen oder gefüllten Raute geschrieben wird.⁷⁴

Vgl. dazu nachfolgend die Tabellen 11 und 12 mit den Zeichenformen ED Lu E 61, EBK/VE 790 + 807.

Tab. 11: edin in ED Lu E 61.

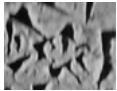
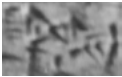
	Rez. A
ED Lu E 61 edin (in A.EDIN)	

Tab. 12: edin in EBK/VE 790 und EBK/VE 807 (Zeichnungen der Autorin).

	790 edin	807 edin?
EBK Rez. A	[...]	
VE Rez. C	[...]	

⁷³ S. Conti 1990, 190.

⁷⁴ Diese Stelle wird allgemein an-edin gelesen, die Deutung ist aber noch unklar. Vgl. dazu Conti 1990, 194 mit FN 600, der die Deutungen von K. Butz und H. Gordon nicht übernimmt.

	790 edin	807 edin?
VE Rez. D	 VE Rez. D5	[...]
VE Rez. A		
VE Rez. B		

Aus dieser Tabelle wird ersichtlich, dass auch edin sowohl mit LAK-742 als auch mit LAK-747 geschrieben wird, d. h. mit hohler oder gefüllter V-Form bzw. mit hohler oder gefüllter Raute am Ende des Körpers.

- c. Die Rauten-Form wird fast ausschließlich in den lexikalischen Manuskripten eblaitischer Tradition (EBK, VE) verwendet und nicht in den Listen mesopotamischen Ursprungs.

Die einzige „Ausnahme“ bildet die Abschrift Animals B Rez. D 51  , die allerdings redaktionell und vom Format her eine spätere eblaitische Kopie der mesopotamischen Liste wiedergibt.

- d. Die Manuskripte EBK Rez. A und VE Rez. C weisen die Rauten-Form für edin vs. die V-Form für baḥar₂ auf. Diese Differenzierung wird ebenso in SE 54–55⁷⁵ aufgenommen, vgl. in der folgende Tabelle 13 die Kopie von Archi:⁷⁶

Tab. 13: edin und baḥar₂ im SE (nach Archi 1987b, 106, 108).

SE	Rez. A	Rez. B
54		

⁷⁵ Da sich diese beide Zeilen am Rand der Tontafeln des Syllabars von Ebla (sowohl bei Rez. A als auch bei Rez. B) befinden, werden hier die Kopien der Zeichen nach Archi 1987b, 106, 108 angeboten.
⁷⁶ S. Archi 1987b, 106, 108.

SE	Rez. A	Rez. B
55		

- e. Diese spezifische eblaitische Differenzierung wird aber nicht konsequent angewendet, s. oben Tabelle Nr. 8, 9, 10 unter den Punkten a. und b.:
- VE Rez. A 1012–1013 mit der Rauten-Form für /baḥar/.
 - EBK/VE 326 mit der V-Form für /baḥar/.
 - EBK Rez. B und VE Rez. B verwenden nur die Rauten-Form für beide Zeichen.
 - VE Rez. B weist vielleicht eine besondere Differenzierung auf, bei der die hohle Raute dem Zeichen *ed in*, die gefüllte Raute hingegen dem Zeichen *baḥar*₂ entspricht. Allerdings würde der Beleg VE Rez. B 1248 mit der gefüllten Raute für *ed in* dagegen sprechen.⁷⁷

Zusammenfassend lässt sich feststellen, dass im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla keine einheitliche Differenzierung der beiden Zeichen erfolgt, sondern verschiedene Tendenzen der Differenzierung auftreten. Weil die Differenzierung nach den Kriterien von Fāra/TAS („hohles V“ vs. „gefüllte Raute“) für die Darstellung der eblaitischen Beleglage nicht genügt, ist eine doppelte LAK-Nr., d. h. LAK-742/747, den nicht eindeutigen Zeichennamen BAḤAR₂ bzw. EDIN für Ebla vorzuziehen.

2. MUNŠUB vs. UŠ_x.

- a. Unter LAK-672 werden diese zwei Zeichen graphisch nicht differenziert, dennoch weisen sie nach Krebernik⁷⁸ in den Texten von Fāra und Tell Abū Šalābiḥ unterschiedliche graphische Varianten auf. Die Differenzierung ist bei der Raute am Ende des Zeichens sichtbar: UŠ_x entspricht der einfacheren Zeichenform mit nur einem waagerechten Keil innerhalb der Raute, während MUNŠUB durch die šeššig-Form mit zwei waagerechten Keilen in der Raute dargestellt wird:

Tab. 14 (nach Krebernik 1998, 277).

UŠ _x	MUNŠUB
	

⁷⁷ S. Pettinato 1982, 331.

⁷⁸ S. Krebernik 1998, 277 mit FN 470.

Sowohl $u\check{s}_x$ als auch $MUN\check{S}UB$ sind im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla belegt,⁷⁹ dennoch werden sie hier graphisch nicht systematisch wie in der mesopotamischen Tradition differenziert.⁸⁰

- b. Eine Differenzierung dieser Zeichen in Ebla ist nur in den Listen mesopotamischen Ursprunges zu beobachten, bei denen die Nachahmung der mesopotamischen Listentradition wohl im Vordergrund stand. $MUN\check{S}UB$ wird jedoch dabei vermutlich nicht zwingend mit der $\check{s}e\check{s}\check{s}ig$ -Form geschrieben, sondern der Unterschied zu $u\check{s}_x$ besteht nur in der Anzahl der waagerechten Keile innerhalb der Raute. Beispielfhaft dafür stehen folgende Belege:
- List of Animals B Rez. A 100 mit LAK-672-ga-kun,⁸¹ das in Verbindung zu kun „Schwanz“ vermutlich als $mun\check{s}ub$ „Haare, Mähne“ zu deuten ist.⁸²

79 1a. $\check{s}e\check{s}\check{s}ig$ -Form mit zwei waagerechten Keilen in der Raute: SE Rez. B 60 = TM.75.G.1907+12680 Vs. vii 13; EBK Rez. A 489 = TM.75.G.2422+ Vs. xii 24; EBK Rez. A 612 = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. ii 6; EBK Rez. A 730 = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. iv 22; EBK Rez. A 849 = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. vii 25; EBK Rez. A 970 = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. x 28; VE Rez. C 579 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. ii 48; VE Rez. C 849 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. xi 24; VE Rez. D5 579 = TM.75.G.1825 Vs. i 7; VE Rez. D5 612 = TM.75.G.1825 Vs. iii 13; VE Rez. D5 849 = TM.75.G.1825 Rs. viii 7; VE Rez. A 489 = TM.75.G.2000+ Vs. xiv 12; VE Rez. A 579 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. ii 22; VE Rez. A 612 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. iii 32; VE Rez. A 849 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. xi 41; VE Rez. A 970 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. xv 32; VE Rez. B 489 = TM.75.G.2001+ Vs. xiii 10'; VE Rez. B 525a = TM.75.G.2001+ Vs. xiv 15; VE Rez. B 849 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. iii 39; **1b.** $\check{s}e\check{s}\check{s}ig$ -Form mit nur einem waagerechten Keil in der Raute: EBK Rez. A 525a = TM.75.G.2422+ Vs. xiii 19; VE Rez. B 612 = TM.75.G.2001+ Vs. xvi 41.

2a. einfache Form mit zwei waagerechten Keilen in der Raute: Animals B Rez. A 100 = TM.75.G.1947 Vs. v 20; **2b.** einfache Form mit nur einem waagerechten Keil in der Raute: Birds Rez. B 9 = TM.75.G.1636 Vs. ii 3; Animals A Rez. A 45 = TM.75.G.3211 Vs. iii 9; Animals A Rez. A 97 = TM.75.G.3211 Vs. vi 7; SE Rez. B 61 = TM.75.G.1907+12680 Rs. i 1; EBK Rez. E 970 = TM.75.G.1926+ Rs. ii 24⁷.

Besondere Form: **1.** nicht $\check{s}e\check{s}\check{s}ig$, ein schräger Keil kreuzt den waagerechten Keil in der Raute: Birds Rez. A 103 = TM.75.G.1415 Vs. vi 13; EBK Rez. B 612 = TM.75.G.10020+ Vs. xv 11; **2.** $\check{s}e\check{s}\check{s}ig$, ein schräger Keil kreuzt den waagerechten Keil in der Raute: EBK Rez. B 579 = TM.75.G.10020+ Vs. xiv 24; EBK Rez. E 849 = TM.75.G.1926+ Rs. xii 12.

Form unklar: 'Animals B Rez. B 100 = TM.75.G.2638 Vs. v 20'; [Animals A Rez. A 19 = TM.75.G.3211 Vs. ii 1]; [SE Rez. A 61 = TM.75.G.1385 Rs. i 1]; [SE Rez. A 60 = TM.75.G.1385 Vs. v 11]; EBK Rez. A 579 = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. i 6; 'EBK Rez. D 730 = TM.75.G.10031+ Vs. ix 13'; 'EBK Rez. D 849² = TM.75.G.10031+ Vs. ix 8'; EBK Rez. D 970 = TM.75.G.10031+ Vs. xi 15; EBK Rez. E 612 = TM.75.G.1926+ Vs. xi 25'; [VE Rez. C 489 = TM.75.G.3171 Vs. xvi 10]; 'VE Rez. C 525 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. i 10'; [VE Rez. C 612 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. iv]; [VE Rez. C 730 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. vii]; [VE Rez. C 0970 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. xiv 33]; [VE Rez. D4 489 = TM.75.G.1426 Vs. iv 7²]; 'VE Rez. D4 525 = TM.75.G.1426 Rs. i 3'; VE Rez. D5 730 = TM.75.G.1825 Vs. x 4; 'VE Rez. A 525a = TM.75.G.2000+ Vs. xv 19'; [VE Rez. A 730 = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. viii 2]; VE Rez. B 579 = TM.75.G.2001+ Vs. xv 33; VE Rez. B 730 = TM.75.G.2001+ Vs. xx 10; VE Rez. B 970 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. vii 24;

80 S. jüngst auch Catagnoti 2013, 49 Nr. 275: $MUN\check{S}UB$ mit Lesung $u\check{s}_x$ für die Zeichenformen in den Verwaltungsurkunden aus Ebla.

81 Diese Zeile weist LAK-672-ga-kun *pace* Bonechi 2008, 2 FN 5 auf.

82 Archi (in Vorbereitung) liest $mun\check{s}ub$ -ga-kun.

- List of Animals A Rez. A [19], 45, 97 mit uš_x-ga als Beschreibung von Rindern, Kühen, Kälbern usw.⁸³
- List of Birds Rez. A 103 und Rez. B 9 mit uš_x-ga^{mušen}, vermutlich einem Wasservogel.⁸⁴

Tab. 15: MUNŠUB und uš_x in den Listen mesopotamischen Ursprunges.

	Animals B Rez. A	Animals A Rez. A		Birds Rez. A	Birds Rez. B
	100	45	97	103	9
MUNŠUB		—	—	—	—
uš _x	—				

Bei dieser Tabelle fällt auf, dass bei uš_x in der Liste Birds Rez. A ein schräger Keil den waagerechten Keil innerhalb der Raute kreuzt.

- c. Die in der letzten Tabelle veranschaulichte graphische Differenzierung wurde in den Listen lokalen eblaitischen Ursprunges nicht mehr beibehalten, sondern man verwendete fast ausschließlich die šeššig-Variante von LAK-762 sowohl für MUNŠUB als auch für uš_x. Folgende Belege lassen sich beispielhaft dafür heranziehen:
- EBK/VE 579 mit ša₃-a-uš_x = *sa-a-tum*, das sich mit Verweis auf den arab. *sawt* vermutlich auf ein Wasserreservoir bezieht.⁸⁵
 - EBK/VE 849 mit ne-su_b = *ne-sa-gu(-um)* in Verbindung mit dem akk. *našāqu* „küssen“.⁸⁶

Tab. 16: MUNŠUB und uš_x in den Listen eblaitischen Ursprunges.

	579 (uš _x)	849 (sub ₃ = MUNŠUB)
EBK Rez. A		

⁸³ Zu uš_x-ga in der Liste der Tiernamen s. Krispijn 1981–82, 51 und Krecher 1983, 186. Vgl. dazu noch die spätere lexikalische Gleichungen zu uškû „junger Mann, Diener“ (AHw. 1441; CAD U/W 301) und *gerseqqû* „ein Bediensteter des Königs oder von Tempeln“ (AHw. 285; CAD G 94–96).

⁸⁴ S. dazu Veldhuis 2004, 235–236.

⁸⁵ S. dazu Conti 1990, 162, Sjöberg 2004, 265 und Bonechi 2008, 7.

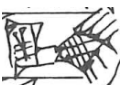
⁸⁶ S. dazu Krebernik 1983, 33, Sjöberg 2004, 269 und Bonechi 2008, 9 mit weiterführender Literatur.

	579 (uš _x)	849 (sub ₅ = MUNŠUB)
VE Rez. C		
VE Rez. D		
VE Rez. A		
VE Rez. B		
EBK Rez. B		—

Es fällt auf, dass bei uš_x in der Liste EBK Rez. B 579 wie in der Liste Birds Rez. A 103 ein schräger Keil den waagerechten Keil innerhalb der Raute kreuzt.

- d. Beide Zeichen sind außerdem aufeinander folgend im Syllabar von Ebla belegt. Das SE Rez. B bietet zudem die unterschiedlichen Lesewerte: SE 60: sudu_x (MUNŠUB) = su-du-u₉-um und SE 61: uš_x = u₃-sum.⁸⁷ Graphisch werden sie hierbei wie in der mesopotamischen Tradition differenziert:⁸⁸

Tab. 17: MUNŠUB und uš_x im SE nach Archi 1987b, 106, 108.

SE	Rez. A	Rez. B
60 MUNŠUB		

⁸⁷ Für die Edition des SE s. Archi 1987b. Zum Zeichen LAK-672 im SE s. Civil 1984, 96.

⁸⁸ Da sich diese beide Zeilen am Rand der Tontafeln des Syllabars von Ebla (sowohl bei Rez. A als auch bei Rez. B) befinden, werden hier die Kopien von Archi 1987b, 106–108 herangezogen.

SE	Rez. A	Rez. B
61 uš ₃		

Die Aufnahme des Zeichens LAK-672 graphisch differenziert in dem SE mit Angabe der zwei verschiedenen Lesungen, stellt somit die Verbindung der mesopotamischen Tradition zu der lokalen eblaitischen Listentradition dar.

3. GANA₂(-tenû) und šE₃(-tenû)

Seit den 1950er Jahren wurde die Aufmerksamkeit des Faches wiederholt auf das Verhältnis zwischen GANA₂(-tenû) und šE₃(-tenû) im dritten Jahrtausend gerichtet.⁸⁹ Insbesondere untersuchte Veldhuis⁹⁰ die Entwicklung dieser Zeichen, die später mit KAR₂ wiedergeben werden, und stellte unter anderem Folgendes fest:⁹¹

- Im frühen III. Jahrtausend (bis FD IIIB) ist das Zeichen KAR₂ noch nicht belegt, sondern es wurden šE₃ und šE₃-tenû_{90°} (d. h. šE₃ um 90° gedreht)⁹² dafür verwendet.
- Ab der sargonischen Zeit ist šE₃-tenû_{90°} nicht mehr belegt, sondern wird als GANA₂ neu interpretiert; die gedrehte Form von GANA₂ (d. h. GANA₂-tenû) ist erst nur in Kompositzeichen wie GIR₁₆, PU₃ oder bei Ligaturen wie IGI+KAR₂ belegt.
- Ab der Ur III-Zeit wird KAR₂ nur mit GANA₂-tenû geschrieben und somit von GANA₂ differenziert.

Darüber hinaus hat Woods⁹³ auf die graphische Ähnlichkeit zwischen GANA₂ und šE₃-tenû_{90°} hingewiesen, so lohnt es sich einen Blick in das eblaitische lexikalische Corpus zu werfen.

⁸⁹ S. Sollberger 1951 zur Verwechslung von šE₃, KAR₂ und GANA₂; Sollberger 1952, 18–19 und Sollberger 1961, 9 zur Lesung des Zeichens URU×šE₃-tenû^{ki}; Civil/Biggs 1966, 11 zur Lesung von KAR₂ gegenüber šE₃(-gunû) im Name Enmerkars; Landsberger 1969, 12; Wilcke 1969, 42 zur Lesung des Namens Enmerkars; Steinkeller 1995, 702 zu 284, 709 zu 516 und 518 zu KAR₂, šE₃-tenû, šE₃ in den archaischen Texten; Volk 1997 zu URU×šE₃-tenû^{ki}; Woods 2007 und zuletzt Veldhuis 2010, 382–383.

⁹⁰ S. Veldhuis 2010, 382–383.

⁹¹ Auf die Punkte a. und b. hatte auch Woods 2007, 328 schon hingewiesen.

⁹² Dazu s. Woods 2007, 327, der auf eine Differenzierung zwischen šE₃-tenû_{90°} (d. h. šE₃ 90° gedreht) und šE₃-tenû_{45°} (d. h. šE₃ ca. 45° gedreht) hinweist. Zu šE₃-tenû_{90°} für kar₂ vgl. z. B. den prä-sargonischen Personennamen nin-en-šE₃-nu-kar₂-kar₂ in Lagaš (z. B. DP 114 Rs. iii 3) oder den Personennamen nin-niḡ₂-ni-šE₃/kar₂ in Umma (CUSAS 14, 27 und passim).

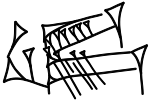
⁹³ S. Woods 2007, 328 FN 17.

Im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla begegnet man diesen Zeichen in der Berufsliste

ED Lu A:

- ED Lu A 52 NUN.ME.KA×ŠE₃-tenû_{45°}
- ED Lu A 53 ŠE₃-tenû_{90°}.ME
- ED Lu A 115 GAL.GANA₂.SANGA

Tab. 18: ŠE₃-tenû und GANA₂ in ED Lu A 52–53, 115.

ED Lu A	Rez. A	Rez. B	Rez. C	Rez. D
52 KA×ŠE ₃ -tenû _{45°}				
53 ŠE ₃ -tenû _{90°}				
115 GANA ₂		[...]		

Aus dieser Tabelle wird Folgendes ersichtlich:

- a. ŠE₃-tenû_{90°} und GANA₂ sind auch in Ebla graphisch ähnlich, sind jedoch durch den „Vorsprung“ des unteren waagerechten Randkeils bei GANA₂ voneinander eindeutig zu unterscheiden. Diese graphische Eigenschaft von GANA₂ wird konstant im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla beibehalten.⁹⁴
- b. Das eingeschriebene Zeichen in ED Lu A 52 weist graphische Unterschiede auf: Bei Rez. A und C ist es sehr schmal (in etwa wie LAK-324 ) , während es in den Rezensionen B und D eher breiter ist. Dennoch handelt es sich dabei wegen der Richtung der inneren Keile nicht um šU, d. h. LAK-323  . Zusätzlich ist der untere waagerechte Keil zu schmal und der Obere zu groß.⁹⁵ Es gilt noch zu

⁹⁴ Vgl. z. B. EBK/VE 455, 777, 842–843 mit GANA₂ in den verschiedenen Rezensionen, vgl. a. EBK Rez. A 777 = TM.75.G.2422+ Rs. v 28; EBK Rez. C 843 = TM.75.G.10030 Vs. xii 18; VE Rez. C 777 = TM.75.G.3171 Rs. ix 5; VE Rez. D 5 777 = TM.75.G.1825 Rs. iii 4; VE Rez. A = TM.75.G.2000+ Rs. ix 22; VE Rez. B 843 = TM.75.G.2001+ Rs. iii 30. EBK Rez. C (= TM.75.G.10030) Rs. i 16 und EBK E (= TM.75.G.1926) Rs. iii 27–28 stellen vermutlich weitere Belege für ŠE₃-tenû_{90°} dar, jedoch kann dies erst nach der Veröffentlichung der Textedition durch Archi (in Vorbereitung) überprüft werden. Picchioni 1997, 80 liest jeweils gana₂. Vgl. dazu Catagnoti 2013, 17 Nr. 56, die hingegen diese zwei Zeichenformen zusammen unter GANA₂ (allerdings ohne Belege) erfasst.

⁹⁵ Vgl. dazu ED Lu A Rez. C 133 = TM.75.G.1312 Rs. vi 6 (und passim im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla) mit KA×šU für bu₃. S. auch Borger (2003, 55) zu Nr. 33 und Nr. 49, wo KA×šU = šUDU₃ zusammen mit KA×KAR₂ = PU₃ mit dem Verweis aufgenommen wird, dass das in KA eingeschriebene Zeichen oft nicht gut erkennbar sei.

klären, ob es sich bei dem eingeschriebenen Zeichen um $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}_{45^\circ}$ oder $\text{GANA}_2\text{-tenû}$ handelt.⁹⁶ Wird das Element in das Zeichen KA eingeschrieben (ED Lu A 52), dann ist der charakteristische „Vorsprung“ nicht mehr zu erkennen. Die oben beobachtete Differenzierung von $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}_{90^\circ}$ scheint dadurch aufgegeben worden zu sein. Nach Veldhuis⁹⁷ tritt die gedrehte Form von GANA_2 (d. h. $\text{GANA}_2\text{-tenû}$) in Kompositzeichen erst ab sargonischer Zeit auf,⁹⁸ deshalb sollte es sich beim Zeichen in ED Lu A 52 um $\text{KA}\times\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}_{45^\circ}$ handeln.

Schließlich kann man $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}_{90^\circ}$ und $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}_{45^\circ}$ von ED Lu A 52–53 mit dem Eintrag EBK/VE 437 vergleichen, wo $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ als eingeschriebenes Zeichen in $\text{GI}\check{\text{S}}\times\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ belegt ist.⁹⁹

Tab. 19: $\text{GI}\check{\text{S}}\times\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ in EBK/VE 437.

	EBK Rez. A	VE Rez. C	VE Rez. A	VE Rez. B	LAK-794	REC 20
437					 geneigte Variante	

Obwohl es auch $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ gelesen wird, handelt sich bei dem in Zeile EBK/VE 437 eingeschriebenen Zeichen um ein leicht nach links geneigtes $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3$ ¹⁰⁰ (vgl. die geneigte Variante von LAK-794) und nicht um das zuvor bei ED Lu A 52 gesehene $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}_{45^\circ}$.¹⁰¹ Die Richtung der inneren Keile im Verhältnis zum äußeren Rahmen unterscheidet

⁹⁶ Catagnoti 2013, 34 Nr. 169 ordnet eine dem $\text{KA}\times\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ von ED Lu A 52 ähnliche Zeichenform dem Zeichen SU_6 mit Lesung sum_4 (allerdings ohne Belege) zu. Zu SU_6 ($\text{KA}\times\text{KID}$ vorsargonisch, später $\text{KA}\times\text{SA}$) und PU_3 ($\text{KA}\times\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ archaisch, $\text{KA}\times\text{SU}$ vorsargonisch und später auch $\text{KA}\times\text{KAR}_2$) s. Krecher 1973, 204–206; zu $\text{SU}_6 = \text{KA}\times\text{KID}/\text{SA}$ s. Biggs 1966, 176 und Landsberger 1968, 145–146, für Ebla s. Fronzaroli 2007. $\text{KA}\times\text{SU} = \text{PU}_3$ könnte archaisch in dem von Steinkeller 2013, 134 veröffentlichten Text vermutlich aus $\text{Ki}\check{\text{S}}$ bezeugt sein.

⁹⁷ S. Veldhuis 2010, 382.

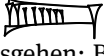
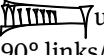
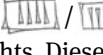
⁹⁸ Catagnoti 2013, 57 Nr. 326 erfasst die nach links geneigte Variante von $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ (wie in $\text{GI}\check{\text{S}}\times\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$) als KAR_2 mit Lesung kar_2 .

⁹⁹ S. Pettinato 1982, 249 und Picchioni 1997, 12. EBK/VE 437 ist im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla folgendermaßen belegt: EBK Rez. A 437 = TM.75.G.2422+ Vs. xi 17; VE Rez. C 437 = TM.75.G.3171+ Vs. xiv 27; VE Rez. A 437 = TM.75.G.2000+ Vs. xii 33; VE Rez. B 437 = TM.75.G.2001+ Vs. xi 24.

¹⁰⁰ Zu $\text{GANA}_2\text{-tenû}/\text{KAR}_2$ vs. $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}$ s. Volk 1997, 58 FN 1 mit Verweis auf Gong 1993, 67.

¹⁰¹ Auf den Unterschied zwischen den leicht nach links geneigten $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3$ und $\check{\text{S}}\text{E}_3\text{-tenû}_{45^\circ}$ hat schon Woods 2007, 328 hingewiesen.

schließlich dieses Zeichen von GANA₂-*tenû*. Pettinato¹⁰² und Picchioni¹⁰³ lesen EBK/VE 437 GIŠ×KARA₂. Archi hingegen giš-šennur,¹⁰⁴ das wohl giššennur „Pflaume“ bezeichnen könnte.¹⁰⁵

Vergleicht man GIŠ×ŠE₃-*tenû* mit ŠE₃-*tenû*_{90°} von ED Lu A 53 oder ŠE₃-*tenû*_{45°} von ED Lu A 52, fällt auf, dass sich die Richtung der inneren Keile gegenüber den äußeren Rahmenkeilen ändert. Bei GIŠ×ŠE₃-*tenû*  bleibt das Verhältnis der Keile bei Linksneigung von ŠE₃ bestehen. Bei ŠE₃-*tenû*_{45°} (ED Lu A 52 ) und ŠE₃-*tenû*_{90°} (ED Lu A 53 ) hingegen, kann man nicht mehr von einer einfachen Drehung von ŠE₃ ausgehen: Bei Drehung nach rechts zeigen die langen Rahmenkeile nicht mehr von „oben“ nach „unten“ (= von „rechts“ nach „links“ nach der Drehung), sondern (in Schreibrichtung) von „links“ nach „rechts“.¹⁰⁶ Bei angenommener Drehung nach links zeigen hingegen die kurzen Innen- und Rahmenkeile nicht mehr von „rechts“ nach „links“ (= nach „oben“ nach der Drehung), sondern nach „unten“. Vgl. hier ŠE₃-*tenû*_{90°} in ED Lu A 53  und  ein normales ŠE₃ (Zeichnung nach Rosengarten Nr. 256) um 90° links/rechts. Dieser Unterschied zwischen ŠE₃-*tenû*_{90°/45°} und ŠE₃ ist nicht nur im lexikalischen Corpus von Ebla, sondern auch in den frühdynastischen Texten aus Mesopotamien zu beobachten. Vgl. z. B. SF 13 Vs. i jeweils 14 (ŠE₃) und 15 (ŠE₃-*tenû*_{90°}) für Fāra oder den Personennamen nin-en-šE₃-nu-kar₂(ŠE₃-*tenû*_{90°})-kar₂(ŠE₃-*tenû*_{90°}) in Lagaš (z. B. DP 114 Rs. iii 3).¹⁰⁷ Es wird also die durch Drehung eines ŠE₃ um 90° oder 45° entstandene Form mit Keilen in der übliche Schreibrichtung ausgeführt.¹⁰⁸

7 Die Paläographie des VE: Die Rezension D

Im Rahmen einer paläographischen Untersuchung der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla lohnt es sich, auf die Paläographie der zweisprachigen Liste, d. h. das VE, näher ein-

¹⁰² Pettinato 1982, 249.

¹⁰³ Picchioni 1997, 12.

¹⁰⁴ S. Archi (in Vorbereitung).

¹⁰⁵ Nach Civil 2008, 63 Nr. 38 wird šennur in TAS normalerweise mit dem Zeichen LAK-278 (κ1B) geschrieben, während in Ebla das Zeichen LAK-278 nur mit einem ŠE₃-*tenû* belegt ist. Zu den verschiedenen Schreibungen von šennur im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. s. Woods 2007, 330–341; für die Identifikation mit „Pflaume“ s. Woods 2007, 330 FN 38 mit weiterführender Literatur; zu EBK/VE 437 s. auch Peust 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Unsere Schreibrichtung.

¹⁰⁷ Diese Unterschiede lassen sich wegen der nicht immer eindeutig bestimmbar Keilrichtung in den archaischen Texten allerdings nicht zurückverfolgen. Außerdem hat Steinkeller 1995 (702 zu 284, 709 zu 516 und 518) schon darauf hingewiesen, dass in den archaischen Texten KAR₂, ŠE₃-*tenû* und ŠE₃ graphisch nicht eindeutig zu unterscheiden sind.

¹⁰⁸ Zur *tenû*-Drehung der Keilschriftzeichen s. Gong 1993, 67 und 2000, 32–35.

zugehen, denn diese Liste stellt ein herausragendes Werk der eblaitischen Schreiber dar. Das „Vocabolario di Ebla“ ist in fünf Rezensionen überliefert: A, C, D, B und A1. A, C, B und A1 sind breite Tafeln und ähneln den Manuskripten der EBK-Listen (s. z. B. EBK Rez. A = TM.75.G.2422+ = MEE XV Taf. I–II). Archi¹⁰⁹ vermutet, dass die Rezensionen A, C und D des VE ungefähr in derselben Zeit, B einige Jahre später entstanden sein könnten. A1 weist darüber hinaus keine elegante Schrift auf, die Register sind klein und mit Zeichen bedeckt. Archi¹¹⁰ vermutet daher, A1 sei später und von einem dritten Schreiber geschrieben worden.

Der Rezension D gilt nun besondere Aufmerksamkeit, denn Pomponio¹¹¹ und Conti¹¹² machten schon auf ihre speziellen Eigenschaften aufmerksam. Insbesondere Conti¹¹³ bemerkte, dass der Sumerische Teil von D dem Originalmuster der zweisprachigen Listen, d. h. der Rez. A von EBK (TM.75.G.2422+) sehr nahesteht und archaische Sumerogramme, die typisch für die frühdynastische mesopotamische Tradition sind, verwendet. Dennoch bietet D mehr oder sogar unterschiedliche Übersetzungen als andere Rezensionen (A, B, C und A1), so dass in dieser Hinsicht D als ein unabhängiges Werk der eblaitischen Schreiber gilt. Bezüglich des Tafelformats umfasst die Rezension D fünf Tafeln unterschiedlicher Größe, die deutlich kleiner als die breiten Tafeln der anderen Rezensionen sind:

Tab. 20: Die Rezension D des VE.

D1	TM.G.75.2284	MEE IV 12 Taf. XVI	H 11,8 × B 11,5 (Tiefe unbekannt) cm
D2	TM.G.75.1774	MEE IV 24 Taf. XVII	H 9,3 × B 10,2 (Tiefe unbekannt) cm
D3	TM.G.75.1448	MEE IV 32 Taf. XVIII	H 6,8 × B 7,6 (Tiefe unbekannt) cm
D4	TM.G.75.1426	MEE IV 40 Taf. XIX–XX	H 11,1 × B 11,8 (Tiefe unbekannt) cm
D5	TM.G.75.1825+3131	MEE IV 47 Taf. XXI–XXII	H 14,8 × B 16,2 (Tiefe unbekannt) cm

Ein Blick auf diese fünf Tafeln zeigt, dass sie leicht rund und deutlich kleiner als die Tafeln der Rezensionen A oder C sind: Sie sehen eher wie kursive eblaitische Texte mit rundem Format aus (s. oben Abb. 2).

Zusammenfassend kann man also sagen, dass inhaltlich und hinsichtlich des Gebrauchs von bestimmten archaischen Sumerogrammen die Rezension D eine Bestrebung der eblaitischen Schreiber darstellt, der mesopotamischen Schreibtradition treu zu bleiben. Allerdings bringt das Tafelformat mehr Aspekte der lokalen

¹⁰⁹ Archi 1992, 19.

¹¹⁰ Archi 1992, 18.

¹¹¹ Pomponio 1985, 179–183.

¹¹² Conti 1989, 75–78.

¹¹³ S. Conti 1990, 4, 42–48.



Abb. 4: Fotos der Tafel der Rez. D vom VE (aus MEE IV, Taf. xvi–xxii).

Produktion mit sich. Wegen dieser Eigenschaften und wegen der zahlreichen von Manuskript D gelieferten Glossen zeigen sich diese Tafeln als ein greifbares Beispiel der enormen geistigen Leistungen, die die eblaitischen Schreibern nicht nur für das Erlernen des Sumerischen und der Keilschrift erbracht haben, sondern auch für die Entwicklung einer eigenen lokalen Schreibtradition.

Aufgrund all dessen verdient die Rezension D des VE paläographisch näher betrachtet zu werden. Nach Pomponio¹¹⁴ und Archi¹¹⁵ ist es wahrscheinlich, dass die fünf Tafeln vom selben Schreiber geschrieben worden sein könnten. Dennoch zeigt ein Blick auf die Zeichen KA und DU ein anderes Bild.

¹¹⁴ Pomponio 1985, 179–183.

¹¹⁵ Archi 1992, 18.

Tab. 21: KA in der Rez. D des VE.

				
VE Rez. D1 173 Rs. vi 9	VE Rez. D2 229 Vs. iii 9	VE Rez. D3 375 Vs. iv 7	VE Rez. D4 532 Rs. ii 5	VE Rez. D5 661 Vs. v 23
				
				VE Rez. D5 702 Vs. viii 7

Die Tafeln D1–3¹¹⁶ weisen ein ähnliches KA mit einem relativ offenen Kopf und mit den noch feinen Keilchen des Körpers auf.

Tafel D4¹¹⁷ dagegen, weist ein stark unterschiedliches KA auf, denn der Kopf ist ganz offen und die eingeschriebenen Keile des Körpers stehen senkrecht und setzen eher unterhalb des oberen langen waagerechten an. Das Zeichen ist meist gröber und nicht kalligraphisch geschrieben.

Bei D5 sind zwei verschiedene Formen von KA belegt, die jeweils den Rezensionen D1 bis D3 (z. B. D5 Zl. 661) und der Rezension D4 (z. B. D5 Zl. 702) ähnlich sind.¹¹⁸

Tab. 22: DU in der Rez. D des VE.

				
VE Rez. D1 39 Vs. iii 12	VE Rez. D2 277 Rs. i 9	VE Rez. D3 362 Vs. iii 2	VE Rez. D4 501 Vs. v 13	VE Rez. D5 591 Vs. ii 10
				
				VE Rez. D5 703 Vs. viii 6

Bei DU ist eine ähnliche Verteilung wie KA zu beobachten:

Bei den Rezensionen D1 bis D3¹¹⁹ ist der Knick unten stärker, was für die jüngeren Zeichen typisch ist, dennoch wirken die Keile eher kalligraphisch und nicht so kräftig

¹¹⁶ Das Zeichen KA ist in dieser Form mehrmals auf Tafeln D1 bis D3 belegt, s. MEE IV Taf. XVI–XVIII.

¹¹⁷ Das Zeichen KA ist in dieser Form auf der Tafel D4 noch folgendermaßen belegt: VE 474 = Vs. ii 17 (PU₃); VE 536 = Rs. ii 11; VE 549 = Rs. iv 8; VE 552 = Rs. iv 14.

¹¹⁸ Das Zeichen KA ist mehrmals mit beiden Zeichenvarianten auf der Tafel D5 belegt. Erste Variante: VE 586 = Vs. i 23 (PU₃); VE 587 = Vs. ii 1; 589 = Vs. ii 5; VE 661–662 = Vs. v 23–25; VE 873 = Rs. ix 15 (PU₃). Zweite Variante: VE 702 = Vs. viii 7; VE 760 = Rs. ii 1; VE 824 = Rs. vi 17 (PU₃); VE 870 = Rs. ix 11 (PU₃).

¹¹⁹ Das Zeichen DU ist in dieser Form öfter auf den Tafeln D1 bis D3 belegt, s. MEE IV Taf. XVI–XVIII.

wie sonst in späteren Phasen. Die zwei Keile vor dem letzten Senkrechten laufen fast parallel.

D4¹²⁰ weist ein eher größeres *du* auf, das dennoch keinen Knick unten hat und bei dem die zwei Keile vor dem letzten Senkrechten noch nicht parallel laufen. Bei D5¹²¹ sind wieder beide Formen belegt: Entweder jene der Rezensionen D1 bis D3 (z. B. D5 Zl. 591) oder jene der Rezension D4 (z. B. D5 Zl. 703).

Demzufolge könnte man vermuten, die Tafeln der Rezension D wurden nicht von demselben Schreiber produziert. Zumindest zwei Schreiberhände gehen aus diesen Beobachtungen relativ deutlich hervor: Ein Schreiber (A) für die Tafeln D1–3 und ein anderer (B) für die Tafel D4. D5 stellt einen besonderen Fall dar, denn dieses Manuskript weist Charakteristika von beiden Schreiberhänden auf. Dies muss nicht unbedingt auf eine Doppelregie hinweisen, sondern erinnert zunächst an die mögliche unterschiedliche Schreibqualität zwischen dem Anfang und dem Ende einer Tafel. Vergleiche z. B. EBK Rez. E = TM.75.G.1926, wo die Zeichen auf der Vorderseite mit ausreichendem Abstand gut auseinander zu halten sind, während am Ende der Rückseite die Fächer schmaler und die Zeichen darin sehr eng geschrieben werden.

Darüber hinaus weisen einerseits Tafel D4 mit einem relativ „jüngeren“ *ka*, aber einem älteren *du*, und andererseits Tafel D5 mit zwei Varianten für beide Zeichen eine Vielfalt der von einem einzigen Schreiber verwendeten Zeichenformen auf, die analog dem Schreibstil von Tira-il und Azi sind¹²² und im Rahmen des oben¹²³ angesprochenen homogenen Verlaufs der graphischen Entwicklung einzuordnen sind. Berücksichtigt man, dass diese fünf Tafeln unterschiedliche Größen aufweisen und inhaltlich aufeinander folgen, ist es möglich, dass die vierte Tafel aus uns unbekannten Gründen ersetzt und eine neue von einem anderen Schreiber geschrieben werden musste. Allerdings waren diese kleineren Tafeln viel handlicher als die anderen großen Rezensionen des Vokabulars. Man könnte sich vorstellen, dass dieser Größenunterschied vom Gebrauch dieser Manuskripte in der Schreiberausbildung bestimmt war.¹²⁴ Die Rezension D des VE kann demnach als ein hochinteressantes Beispiel der in der Schreiberausbildung von Ebla womöglich verwendeten Handbücher gelten.

120 Das Zeichen *du* ist in dieser Form öfter auf der Tafel D4 belegt, s. MEE IV Taf. XIX–XX.

121 Das Zeichen *du* ist öfter mit beiden Zeichenvarianten auf der Tafel D5 belegt. Die erste Variante: Vs. Kol. i–v; Rs. Kol. ix. Die zweite Variante: Vs. Kol. vi–x; Rs. i–vii.

122 Vgl. dazu Sallaberger 2001, 443 und Paoletti (2015).

123 S. §5 s.v. 3.

124 Die genaue Verteilung der fünf Tafeln der Rez. D des VE auf den Regalen des Archivs hat Archi 1986a, 85 angegeben: D1 = NAb lev. 1; D2 + D4 = NCh̄ha lev. 1; D3 = NA lev. 1; D5 = NA, d. h. auf der höchsten Ebene des Regals an der nördlichen Seite (auf dem Plan bei der Abb. 1 mit einem Asterisk gekennzeichnet). Zudem schreibt Archi 1988, 68 bezüglich der Tafelformate, dass „[the] very form of the tablets was enough to give the scribe an immediate idea of the document's content“. Vgl. auch die Beschreibung der Tafelformate der Verwaltungsurkunden für die verschiedenen Vorgänge in Archi 1986b, 24.

Untersucht man also diese Tafeln aus verschiedenen Perspektiven und kombiniert man die Analyse des Inhalts, die Reihenfolge der Rezensionen, des Formats und der Größe mit den paläographischen Beobachtungen, ermöglichen es uns diese Tontafeln, die Arbeit der einzelnen Schreiber am Palast von Ebla so genau und so nahe zu betrachten, wie es für andere Textgattungen der Keilschriftkultur nur sehr selten möglich ist.

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Materiality and Presence of the Anitta Text in Original and Secondary Context

Considerations on the Original Nature of the Proclamation of Anitta (CTH 1) and Its Transmission as Part of Hittite Traditional Literature

1 Introduction

The so-called Anitta text (CTH 1)¹ is a much-discussed literary work that can be traced in the archives of the Hittite capital city Ḫattuša/Boğazköy throughout the history of the Hittite kingdom. Its significance lies in the fact that it recounts events which precede the first Hittite kings, who are attested in contemporary sources, by approximately a century² and that both periods are separated by a ‘dark age’ due to a hiatus of textual records that follows the demise of the Old Assyrian trading colonies in Anatolia and lasts until the establishment of Hittite administration at Ḫattuša. The composition, which is preserved in Hittite language, narrates the conquest and incorporation into their existing sphere of influence of Kaneš/Neša, which was itself in control of a substantial area, at the hands of Piṭhana, ruler of Kuššara, before setting out to detail his son Anitta’s own achievements.

Rather than dwelling on details of reading, reconstruction or interpretation of single text passages, the present contribution aims to make observations concerning the origin and nature of the text and the wider implications of its transmission as part of Hittite traditional literature throughout Hittite history.

This article emerged from the Heidelberg Collaborative Research Center 933 “Material Text Cultures. Materiality and Presence of Writing in Non-Typographic Societies”. The CRC 933 is financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

1 Editions of the text have been published by Neu 1974 and Carruba 2003. In addition, translations were provided by Hoffner 2003 and Beckman 2006. For detailed bibliographical references see <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/> sub CTH 1.

2 See recently Barjamovic/Hertel/Larsen 2012, who estimate the conquest of Kaneš/Neša by Anitta’s father Piṭhana which marks the start of the narrative at around 1750 BC (p. 40), roughly a century before the traditional estimate of Ḫattušili I’s accession to the throne in Ḫattuša in 1650 BC (p. 51).

2 Anatolia in the First Third of the Second Millennium BC

The events of the Anitta text centre on Kaneš/Neša, modern Kültepe, which is located about 20 kilometres to the North West of the Turkish city Kayseri and was the location of an Old Assyrian colony based in the lower town of the city. Part of the Old Assyrian trading network, which had established outposts called *kārum* and smaller stations referred to as *wabartum* throughout Anatolia and Northern Syria, it functioned as the nerve of the activities and was the de facto representative of Assyrian administration in Anatolia. It was organised to mirror the political and religious institutions of the capital city Assur and served as its point of contact for any directives from the seat of the kingdom, modifying these as it saw fit before relaying the information to other merchants' seats. Particularly the excavations in the lower town—some tablets have also been discovered on the upper mound—have yielded large numbers of cuneiform tablets in Old Assyrian script and language and do not only give insight into the trading activities and the lives of the Assyrian families in Anatolia and at home in Assur but also bear some indication of the political situation in early second millennium Anatolia.

The textual records of the lower town come from two stratigraphic levels labelled II and Ib; although the lower town shows on-going occupation and there is evidence for the presence of a limited number of foreigners also in level Ia, the archaeological data is characterised by a decreasing level of prosperity and a lack of associated large administrative buildings as well as any written sources.³ Level II and Ib are divided by a horizon of destruction, which is also evident on the upper mound, and a number of changes in the material culture of the settlement are traceable, but it can now be demonstrated that the gap in textual records amounts to four years only and that the oft-maintained complete occupational hiatus and cessation and subsequent revitalisation of all Anatolian-wide Assyrian activities did not take place.⁴ The destruction of the settlement at Kaneš/Neša level II bears evidence of the political scenery of Anatolia and Northern Syria, which was characterised by relatively small interdependent states, which were often in conflict with one another. This seems to have prompted the Assyrians to found dependencies in all the major political centres, and the inner-Anatolian shifts in power and the move towards larger polities in the early second millennium BC may have been part of the still unclear circumstances leading to the abandonment of the Assyrian trading outposts following level Ib.

Due to the absence of textual records from the following 'dark age' the start of the Hittite archives and the first datable text sources from the reign of Ḫattušili I

³ Barjamovic/Hertel/Larsen 2012, 51f.

⁴ Barjamovic/Hertel/Larsen 2012, 28ff.

(ca. 1650 BC) create an artificial starting point to Hittite history, which does not reflect the historical situation.⁵ A combination of references contained in historiographic documents from Ḫattuša and glimpses in the texts from the late Old Assyrian period show that the emergence of a larger political entity in Anatolia that is to manifest itself as the Hittite kingdom ruled from Ḫattuša, is by no means accidental or without previous development and that these shifts are foreshadowed already in the late *kārum* period. The inclination to create coalitions between city-states and form realms with larger territory is reflected in the reference to local rulers as servants, i.e. vassals, of the kings of Mama and Kaneš/Neša in the letter sent by Anum-Ḫirwe to Waršama⁶ and the military exploits of Piṭḫana and his son Anitta described in the Anitta text illustrate this further. The available evidence relating to the period prior to the establishment of Ḫattuša as capital suggests the existence of a ruling family or elite, whose members were not all located in a single city but positioned in a number of regional centres, and struggles for predominance amongst the family members are immediately apparent.⁷

The later Hittite capital Ḫattuša itself was the seat of a local ruler during the Old Assyrian period and the base of a *kārum* in the lower town⁸ and it was important and meddlesome enough to be destroyed and accursed by Anitta.⁹ Due to the reevaluation of the Assyrian eponym list and its implications for the chronology of the Old Assyrian period it can now be shown that there may not have been a hiatus between the last known king of Kaneš/Neša, Zuzu, and Ḫattušili I's predecessors.¹⁰ The strong links between Kaneš/Neša and Ḫattuša¹¹ imply a certain amount of cultural continuity and

5 Although there is no evidence for a settlement hiatus in Ḫattuša in the period preceding the Old Hittite kingdom as has often been claimed (Neve 1984, 89), it is more than likely that the royal name Ḫattušili, 'the one of Ḫattuša', is of significance and has to be connected to a conscious move of the capital to this city (cf. below; thus also Bryce 1983, 58).

6 The letter from Anum-Ḫirwe of Mama to Waršama of Kaneš/Neša (see Balkan 1957), which refers to other local rulers as the servants, i.e. vassals, of either kings (ll. 4–14), was discovered on the upper mound of Kaneš/Neša.

7 The struggles do not end with the reign of Ḫattušili I, but are at the centre of a number of texts from his reign and remain commonplace throughout the period described in the Telipinu edict (CTH 19, see below).

8 At the time of the overview published by Dercksen 2001 some 71 tablets had been published (ibid. 49). Note, however, that the estimate of "little more than fifty years" of Assyrian trading activities in *kārum* Ḫattuš has to be reevaluated on the basis of evidence from the texts from Kaneš/Neša to having lasted "more than a century" (Barjamovic 2011, 297).

9 A king of Ḫattuša, whose name is lost in the break is first mentioned in relation to an uprising against Anitta following his father's death (l. 14) and the destruction and subsequent cursing of Ḫattuša following a military conflict with its king Piyušti features in the second part of the Hittite Anitta text (l. 36–51).

10 Barjamovic/Hertel/Larsen 2012, 51.

11 Next to the fact that the Anitta text features prominently in the archives of the Hittite capital, the native word used for the language Hittite, *nešumnili* "that of Neša", bears witness to a strong

the fact that no written sources are available for the interim period may have to be sought not in their absence but in the fact that Ḫattuša was not at the centre of the kingdom preceding the accession of Ḫattušili I. The texts associated with his reign do not only show an awareness of the era preceding government in Ḫattuša, but actively seek to link Ḫattušili I with preceding generations.

3 References to the Pre-Ḫattuša Period in Old Hittite Historiographic Texts

Written more than a century after the establishment of Hittite administration at Ḫattuša, the Telipinu edict¹² does not begin its historical account with the reign of Ḫattušili I, but with reflections on his predecessor Labarna's reign. This shows that the ancient historiographers considered him an extrinsic part of Hittite history and that modern understanding of Ḫattušili I as founder of the Hittite kingdom is based predominantly on a lack of pertinent textual records from the period preceding his reign.¹³ Labarna's position as founder of the dynasty is also reflected in the so-called Cruciform Seal: in an effort to legitimise the reign of the Empire Period ruler Šuppiluliuma I, who had ascended the throne by dubious means at the cost of his brother Tudḫaliya the Younger, it lists not only a genealogy extending back four generations but, on the reverse of the seal, adds the first four rulers of the Hittite kingdom together with their queens, starting with Labarna and his wife Tawananna.¹⁴

identification with the previous power centre.

12 *CTH 19*. The text is preserved in fragments from a total of nine manuscripts in Hittite language (*KBo* 12, 7 + *KBo* 12, 12 + *KBo* 12, 5 + *KBo* 3, 68 + *KBo* 3, 1; *KBo* 3, 67 + *KUB* 31, 17 + *KUB* 31, 3; *KUB* 11, 5; *KUB* 11, 6; *KBo* 19 97 + *IBoT* 3, 84 + *KUB* 11, 2; *KBo* 12, 6; *VBoT* 107; *KBo* 19, 96 + *KUB* 11, 1; *KBo* 7, 15 + *KBo* 12, 4) as well as two very fragmentary examples of an Akkadian language version (*KBo* 19, 96 + *KUB* 11, 1; *KBo* 7, 15 + *KBo* 12, 4). For bibliographical references see www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk.

13 Attempts to attribute the land donation tablet discovered at İnandık in 1968 (İK 174–66, published by Balkan 1973) or a letter sent by a Hittite sovereign to the ruler of Tikunāni (Salvini 1994) to Labarna I, have not been corroborated by the evidence.

14 The seal, which has not been discovered but can be reconstructed from a number of sealings, had two sides, which arranged four panels around a central circular field, giving it the appearance of a 'Maltese cross' and bore a total of ten names of Hittite kings with their respective queens. It has been shown by Dinçol et al 1993 (particularly 96f. sub 'history') that the central panel of the obverse identifies the owner of the seal as the Empire Period ruler Muršili II, who is surrounded by the four kings preceding his father and predecessor Šuppiluliuma I, who appears in the central field of the reverse. Surrounding the latter are arranged the names of four Old Hittite kings starting with Labarna.

From the introduction to the Annals of Ḫattušili I (CTH 4),¹⁵ Tawananna is known to have been the sister of Ḫattušili I's father and she appears to function here as the link to the previous generation of Hittite rulers and to legitimise the reign of the new king.¹⁶ Further, the introductory statement of the Akkadian version of this text reads *ina* ^{uru}KÙ.BABBAR-ti LUGAL-utta *itepuš* “he exercised kingship in Ḫattuša”, putting particular emphasis on the location of the geographical situation. This indicates that the establishment of the city as the capital of the kingdom was directly related to Ḫattušili's person and was at the centre of his association with the, seemingly, additional name Ḫattušili, “the one of Ḫattuša”.¹⁷ The possibility that the power base of the realm was originally located elsewhere is complemented by the use of the additional title “man of Kuššara”, attested in the Hittite version of the annals.¹⁸

Further witness to Ḫattušili's close association with Kuššara, which incidentally is also the origin of Anitta's father Piṭḫana, comes from his so-called Political Testament (CTH 6),¹⁹ which installs his grandson Muršili I as heir to the throne and, according to the colophon, was composed in the city, where the Hittite king was laid up during a severe illness.²⁰ The text provides instructions for the heir and the Hittite administration alike that are to ensure a successful reign and gives anecdotal evidence of examples of discord in the royal family that have had an adverse impact on the fate of the land Ḫatti. After recounting the struggle for predominance on the part of Ḫattušili I's own children, the text makes reference to Ḫattušili's grandfather's appointment of Labarna as successor to the throne and the following upheavals.²¹ The passage is

15 CTH 4. The text is preserved in a near-complete Akkadian copy (KBo 10, 1) as well as one relatively well-preserved (KBo 10, 2) and fragments of four further manuscripts in Hittite language (KBo 10, 3; KUB 23, 41 (+) IBoT 3, 134 (+) KUB 57, 48 + VBoT 13; IBoT 4, 264; KBo 50, 198 and KUB 23, 20 (+) KUB 23, 33 (+) KUB 40, 6).

16 ŠA ^{munus}TA-WA-NA-AN-NA DUMU ŠEŠ-ŠU (KBo 10, 2 i 3) “the son of the brother of Tawananna”. The passage is only partly preserved in the Akkadian parallel text, but can be restored on its basis: *ša* ^{munus}ta-w[*a-na-an-na* DUMU ŠEŠ-ŠU] (KBo 10, 1 obv. 1). Although Ḫattušili I's father is most likely to be identified with the would-be usurper and rival of Labarna I, Papaḫdilmah (Beal 2003, 16f.), his own accession to the throne seems to have been justified.

17 In the Akkadian version of the Annals (CTH 4.I) as well as the Political Testament (CTH 6) and the Tikunāni Letter the issuing king is always referred to as L/Tabarna, while he appears as Ḫattušili I in the Hittite language Annals (CTH 4.II) and any later references to his person, likely to be partly due to an effort to distinguish him from his predecessor of the same name.

18 LÚ ^{uru}KU-UŠ-ŠAR “man of Kuššar” (KBo 10, 2 i 2).

19 The bilingual, Akkadian-Hittite, composition is preserved on a single manuscript: KUB 1, 16 (+) KUB 40, 65. For bibliographical references see <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/>.

20 *i-nu-ma* / LUGAL GAL *ta-ba-ar-na i-na* ^{uru}ku-uš-šar^{ki} *im-ra-aš-šú-ma* “When the Great King Tabarna had become ill in Kuššara” (KUB 1, 16 col. 1f.).

21 ^{ḫu-uh}ḫa-aš^ḫ (“A”) ^{mi-iš} [la-ba-a]r-na-an^ḫ DUMU-ša-an ^{uru}ša-na-ḫu-it-ti ^{iš-ḫ}ku-na^ḫ-aḫ-ḫi-iš [EGIR-an-da-m]a-kánIR.MEŠ-ŠU^ḫ LÚ.MEŠGAL^ḫ.GALud-da-a-ar-še-etḫu-^ḫur^ḫ-tal-li-e-er[^{nu-uš-š}a-^ḫan^ḫpa-pa-aḫ-di^ḫ-il-ma-ḫa-an a-še-še-er “My grandfather appointed [Laba]rna, as his son in Šanaḫuitta, but [afterwards] his servants, the high officials, altered his words and placed Papaḫdilmah (there).”

further evidence that preceding the establishment of a firm Hittite administration in Ḫattuša the elite, which ruled central Anatolia, installed members of its family in the major political centres to apportion responsibility for smaller entities within the kingdom, a practice that was not given up by Ḫattušili and is evidenced throughout the Old Hittite kingdom.²²

In addition to occasional references found in sources relating to the Old Hittite period, three compositions discovered in the Hittite archives are set—in two cases entirely, in one at least partly—in a period preceding a Hittite kingdom based on Ḫattuša as capital and strike connections to the period of the Old Assyrian *kārū* in general and to Kaneš/Neša in particular.

Two tablet fragments subsumed under the lemma *CTH 2*²³ concern Anum-ḫirwe, who is otherwise known as king of Mama from a letter sent to Waršama of Kaneš/Neša and found in Kültepe.²⁴ The events described focus on an occurrence surrounding the cities Zalwar and Ḫaššuwa in Northern Syria, both of which are closely associated with Anum-ḫirwe in documents from Mari.²⁵ It appears that both fragments formed part of *Sammeltafeln*, that also contained the “story of the shepherd boy”,²⁶ which in turn contains a fragmentary reference to a servant girl of one Anitta,²⁷ whose identity and function remain lost in the broken context.

Another historical narrative is presented by the Zalpa Story (*CTH 3*),²⁸ which is divided into two distinct parts, not only because of the break in the written sources. Although not dated with absolute certainty due to the lack of royal names used in the composition, the second part seems to relate to the early reign of Ḫattušili I and his immediate predecessors, while the first part presents events taking place in the more distant past in a semi-legendary account involving a queen of Kaneš/Neša and her 30 sons and 30 daughters from two multiple births.

(*KUB* 1, 16 iii 42–25). It appears that the grandfather in question has to be equated with a certain BULGAL-*ma* mentioned in the offering lists for deceased kings found at the Hittite capital (*CTH* 661) where he appears as father of the usurper Papahdimaḫ, who in turn has been shown to have been Ḫattušili I's father and is at the centre of the throne rivalries outlined in the passage.

²² The edict details the fate of Ḫattušili's son Ḫuzziya in Tappašanda (*ibid.* ii 63–67) and makes reference to rulers of provincial centres that are not to seek influence over the new heir to the throne (*ibid.* ii 61f.).

²³ While *KUB* 36, 99 exhibits Old Hittite ductus, *KBo* 12, 3 is written in a late hand. For bibliographical references see <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/>.

²⁴ g/t 35, published by Balkan 1957.

²⁵ Miller 2001, 68.

²⁶ An additional fragment preserving part of this story is *KBo* 50, 2; for which see Haas 2006, 27, “die Geschichte vom Hirtenknaben”.

²⁷ GÊME 'a-ni-it-ta (*KBo* 50, 2 obv. 5').

²⁸ *KBo* 7, 30 (+) *KBo* 52, 1 (+) *KBo* 50, 3; *KBo* 12, 63; *KBo* 12, 19; *KBo* 12, 18; *KBo* 12, 92; *KUB* 23, 23; *KBo* 3, 38; *KUB* 48, 79; *KBo* 22, 2; *KBo* 26, 126 as well as the unpublished Bo 9011. For bibliographical references see <http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/hetkonk/>.

Finally, the Anitta text (*CTH* 1) relates the conquest of Kaneš/Neša by Anitta's father Piṭḫana of Kuššara and Anitta's own subsequent military activities in wider Eastern Anatolia including Ḫattuša itself (see below).

4 Anitta of Kuššara and Kaneš/Neša in Contemporary and Later Hittite Sources

The existence of the historical person Anitta, son of Piṭḫana, ruler of Kaneš/Neša, is beyond doubt and secured by a number of contemporary sources:

A type of Old Assyrian legal text attested in Kültepe and elsewhere and usually referred to as *iqqāti* documents due to a prominent formula within the texts,²⁹ provides evidence on contemporary local rulers, referred to as *rubā'um*, and a high official by the title *rabi similtim*, who is most likely to be understood as the designated heir to the throne. Three documents of this type name Anitta as *rabi similtim* next to his father and predecessor Piṭḫana, who is introduced as *rubā'um*,³⁰ while in a further three examples Anitta himself is entitled *rubā'um*.³¹ The texts exhibit the interaction between the rulers and the Assyrian merchants.

In 1954 a bronze spearhead (frequently referred to as 'dagger' in older literature (fig. 1) was found together with a badly damaged bronze vessel³² during the excavations on the upper mound of Kültepe in a layer of burnt debris of a building that was of "monumental size" and later interpreted as a palace.³³ The weapon, which according to the excavator is of the so-called Cypriote type but without exact parallels in its particular stylistic features,³⁴ bears the short inscription É.GAL *a-ni-ta ru-ba-im* "palace of Anitta, the ruler".

The contemporary sources give little detail on Anitta's reign and the information has to be supplemented from the Hittite narrative of the Anitta Text (*CTH* 1), which is preserved in a number of fragmentary manuscripts. The best preserved of these is

²⁹ Forlanini 1995, 123. For an up-to-date list of the known *iqqāti* documents see Kryszat 2008, 161f.

³⁰ kt k/k 9; kt š/k 3; *TC* 3 214a/b. Cf. Kryszat 2008, 164f. Piṭḫana is attested alone in a further text without title (kt n/k 11).

³¹ He occurs once simply as *rubā'um* (kt 89/k 371), once with the addition of *ša Ākkuwa* (*OIP* 27 1), the implications of which need to be considered, and in the third document is given the more powerful title *rubā'um rabûm* (*OIP* 27 49a/b).

³² The vessel, which seems to have had two spouts, has (spoutless) pottery parallels in level Ib of the *kārum* area of the city (Özgüç 1956, 36). Its state of preservation made it impossible to decide whether it may once have borne an inscription too.

³³ Balkan 1955, 78, Özgüç 1956, 33.

³⁴ Examples of the Cypriote type are found throughout Anatolia, Syria and Iran and share a "bent tang", but their exact appearance can vary considerably (Özgüç 1956, 36).

written in Old Hittite ductus (*KBo* 3, 22), while the remaining three are dated on palaeographical grounds to the 14th (*KUB* 26, 71) and 13th century (*KUB* 36, 98+; *KBo* 22, 5), i.e. the Empire Period. In addition, two *Sammel tafeln*, *KUB* 26, 71 and *KUB* 36, 98+, present the Anitta text as well as passages of the Chronicle of Ammuna (*CTH* 18), a historiographic text centred on the reign of one of the lesser-known Old Hittite monarchs. As far as can be ascertained, the late fragment *KBo* 22, 5 is not an exact copy but has to be understood as a parallel text including passages that differ from those of the other manuscripts.

As reconstructed on the basis of the available manuscripts, the composition starts with an introductory passage emphasising Anitta's relationship to the Storm God, characterised by Erich Neu (1974) as the *prooemium* (obv. 1–4),³⁵ before relating the circumstances of the conquest of the city Neša, apparently, although not explicitly stated, during the reign of Anitta's father Piṭḫana (obv. 5–9). There follow additional military activities of Anitta himself after his father's death (obv. 10–29, 30–32) and instructions concerning a “tablet” and the “gate” of Anitta (obv. 33–35), which present a break in the narrative. Following this, further military activities against Zalpa, Ḫattuša and Šalatiwara are recounted (obv. 36–rev. 10), followed by a building report (rev. 11–14) and a hunting report (rev. 15–19), before returning to the subject of renewed military activities against Šalatiwara (rev. 20–28) and an alliance with the ruler of Puruṣḫanda (rev. 29–35).³⁶

5 The “Original” Anitta Text – Questions of Date, Language and Circumstances

Since the discovery of the Anitta text among the tablet finds from the Hittite capital and the initial publication of the Old Hittite manuscript and one of the *Sammel tafeln* by Emil Forrer in 1922,³⁷ questions regarding the origin, circumstances and date of the composition as well as its original language have arisen, which have been at the centre of many discussions since and have often led to varying results.

Although disagreeing on its proposed original language, most early studies of the text suggested that the Hittite composition found on clay tablets in the archives of Ḫattuša should represent the transmission of a coherent monumental inscription from the reign of Anitta, identical in contents and structure to the composition found in the Hittite archives. This is now generally rejected and a combination of infor-

³⁵ Line numbers follow Neu 1974's manuscript A = *KBo* 3, 22, which preserves the entire length of the left margin.

³⁶ For a full translation of the text refer to Neu 1974 and Carruba 2003.

³⁷ Forrer 1922 nos. 7 and 30.



Fig. 1: The bronze spearhead of Anitta with detail of the inscription É.GAL ¹*a-ni-ta ru-ba-im* (after Willinghöfer 2002).

mation from more than one separate contemporary texts from the reign of Anitta is assumed by most.³⁸ The first of these concludes with instructions concerning a gate and a curse, which cannot be accommodated in the middle of a coherent narration³⁹ and is very likely to represent the closing paragraph of a ‘monumental’ inscription placed in ‘Anitta’s gate’, probably that of his palace, as is indicated by the sentence

KBo 3, 22 obv. 33:	ʾke-e ud-da-a-arʾ []t ² i-na KÁ.GAL-ia t[e ² x x x]
KUB 36, 98a obv. 4':	[] tup-pí-ia-ʾaz a-na KÁʾ []

“These words *by means* of a tablet in my gate ...”⁴⁰

³⁸ Principally Steiner 1984, and followed by Klinger 2005, 139 and Beckman 2006, 216. See also Carruba 2001, 68f., §9 2), who toils with the idea of an Old Hittite composition based on oral transmission, which seems unlikely in light of the passage concerning the gate.

³⁹ Although cf. Haas 2008, 29f., who maintains that the composition is the direct copy of an inscription affixed to the palace gate at Kaneš/Neša and explains the presence of the passage concerning “tablet” and “gate” in the middle of the text as a miscopied colophon from an original two-column tablet.

⁴⁰ Collation of the photograph of KBo 3, 22 shows the traces to be compatible with the reading ʾud-da-a-arʾ, contrary to the hand copy (cf. also Neu 1974, 25). Further, the traces before the break bear resemblance to the beginning of TE and it is likely that a 1st person singular preterite form has to be

This initial source, which will be referred to as the Anitta inscription in the remainder, is followed by two distinct narratives of military campaigns, the first of which culminates in building and hunting activities, while the second concludes with the report of a forged alliance with another major political power.

As regards the possibility of a composition that does not pre-date the Hittite administration in Ḫattuša, this seems somewhat unlikely in light of the inclusion of the passage that details the curse of the city Ḫattuša. While this could be explained if the text set out to discredit Anitta's deeds and legitimise the local dynasty, the text bears no indication of this. On the contrary, Anitta is invested with the title LUGAL "king" and associated with the city Kuššara, which also plays an important role in the identity of Ḫattušili I.

A compilation of *CTH 1* from more than one source adds a certain complication to the question of the original language used, as it is theoretically possible that not all sources were written in the same language. In any case, it is necessary to allow for a process of evaluation and possible editing of the original sources. This invalidates the argument that the typical Boğazköy ductus, exhibited already in the Old Hittite manuscript could only be accounted for if the composition was translated from a different language, as a mere copying process could not explain the loss of an original Old Assyrian ductus, which would have been the only type of ductus available to the local Kaneš/Neša scribes at the time.⁴¹ Additionally, the discovery of letters in the *kārum* at Kültepe written in a script different to that of the Old Assyrian texts and closer to the Old Babylonian cursives of the Northern Syrian region, from which the Hittite ductus is derived,⁴² means that it is not entirely out of the question that a precursor to the later Boğazköy ductus was already in use in Anatolia preceding the start of the Hittite archives at Ḫattuša.

Traces of a Hittite language tradition pre-dating the archives of Ḫattuša could be the apparently 'antiquated' form of the Hittite language employed in the text⁴³

restored, so that *teḫhun* "I placed" is thinkable and this would fit the available space. But see Neu 1974, 25f., who concludes that the only possible readings are AR or ŠI and arrives at a reconstruction *š[iyanun]*, which, however, cannot lead to the offered translation "diese Worte habe ich auf einer Tafel in meinem Tor eingedrückt/gesiegelt" as this would require *tuppi-* to be in the accusative case. For further discussion of this and other previously proposed readings see Miller 2012, 278f., who leaves the question open to debate. As he points out, the restoration of an akkadographic Gtn imperative form *š[I-TA-AS-SI/SA]* (with Steiner 1984, 67), is unlikely given the fact that the Akkadian verb *šasû* is not used as an Akkadogram. The traces following the break in *KBo 3*, 22 look most like the end of IT, while AZ is more likely for the parallel in *KUB 36*, 98a. The alternation of the instrumental ending *-it* in the Old Hittite manuscript with the ablative ending *-az* in the later manuscript is not surprising as the latter incorporates the function of the former form the Middle Hittite period onwards.

⁴¹ "Die Entstehung eines Textes in Boğazköy-Schrift [...] ist völlig undenkbar." (Güterbock 1938, 143).

⁴² Hecker 1996.

⁴³ Neu 1974, 132f. citing the complete lack of the locative particles *-za* and *-kan* and the divine name ^d*sius*.

and the use of an otherwise unexplained Old Babylonian sign form in the Hittite copies.⁴⁴ The use of the Sumerogram AZ.ĜI.A “bears” instead of UG.ĜI.A “animals” in the second part of the inscription detailing Anitta’s hunting prowess, which has been cited as a misunderstanding evidencing a translation from Old Assyrian into Hittite is not conclusive:⁴⁵ a parallel from the Hittite KI.LAM festival text,⁴⁶ which describes a festival connected to the gate house, shows the same association of bears with boars, stags, lions and leopards as the passage in question and would support the logogram present in the text.⁴⁷

Arguments for the suitability of one of the two languages for reaching the intended audience, which have been brought forward in favour of both languages,⁴⁸ have to be suspended in the absence of any comparative material.

6 A Question of Material

Having established that the existence of an inscription by Anitta in the gate of his palace, which forms part of the later Hittite narrative, is likely, some thought should be given to the nature of its medium and location. As reflected by the introduction to the most recent translation of the text, the inscription of Anitta has usually been assumed to have been written on a stone tablet,⁴⁹ despite the fact that no parallels for inscriptions of this type can be found in Anatolia during the Old Assyrian period.⁵⁰ In fact, monumental stone inscriptions in cuneiform writing are also unknown from the duration of the later Hittite kingdom, when the hieroglyphic writing system was used

⁴⁴ The sign NE displays two final verticals (Otten 1951, 43f).

⁴⁵ *KBo* 3, 22 rev. 60ff. with duplicates; thus Haas 2006, 29 n. 28.

⁴⁶ *nu* DINGIR-na-aš / [hu-u]-i⁷-tar PIRIG.TUR KÙ.BABBAR UR.MAḤ KÙ.SIG₁₇ / [ŠA]ĜIŠ.GI KÙ.BABBAR ŠAḤ.GIŠ^{na}ZA.GIN / “AZ” KÙ.BABBAR ū-wa-an-zi IT-TI / DĀRA.ĜI.A A-ŠAR-ŠU-NU *ap-pa-an-zi* “The [ani]mals of the gods—the silver leopard, the golden lion, the silver [b]oar, the lapis lazuli boar, the silver bear—are coming. They are taking their place together with the stags.” (*KBo* 10, 25 vi 4–8). The passage is also cited as a comparison by Haas 2006, 31.

⁴⁷ Even if a mistake was to be propagated, this would more likely have to be attributed to a simple copying error of two very similar signs, especially if the scribe was unfamiliar with the Sumerian language.

⁴⁸ Cf. Kammenhuber 1958, 150, who believes the local languages to be inept for this purpose, but Klengel 1999, 28 n. 51, who can only understand an inscription displayed in the city gate as aimed at the local population and thus written in their language.

⁴⁹ Haas 2006, 28: “Der ursprüngliche Schriftträger, eine Steintafel, scheint am Palasttor von Kaneš/Neša angebracht gewesen zu sein.” This might go back to Neu’s assumption “es handelt sich dabei wohl nicht um eine Tafel aus Metall”, which is based entirely on his understanding of the (uncertain) reconstruction of the verb *šiya-* “(to) seal” (see above, note 39) as not compatible with a material other than clay.

⁵⁰ As noted by Steiner 1984, 66.

in all known instances and was a much later development in any case.⁵¹ The complete absence of any such inscriptions making use of the established script in Hittite Anatolia could only be accounted for with difficulty if one assumes their presence in earlier periods of Anatolian history, as remnants or memory of their existence would have certainly survived and given rise to similar works.

It is thus more probable that the text was written on metal, most likely in the form of a tablet, a practice that has parallels in the Hittite period:

one of the most prominent amongst the state treaties concluded by the Hittite kings is that issued by the late king Tudḫaliya IV for his cousin Kurunta of Tarḫuntassa (*CTH* 106), due to the fact that it was written on a bronze tablet discovered in 1986 during restoration works to the inner side of the city wall of Ḫattuša.⁵² The tablet had been deposited horizontally (fig. 2) and seemingly with great care in a pitch that was dug close to the wall, approximately 30 cm below the surrounding plastered street level and some 35 meters to the west of the sphinx gate in the south of the city. It is possible that this was a secondary location and that the tablet was originally placed in the gate itself.⁵³



Fig. 2: Bronze tablet in situ (taken from Neve 1993, 23).

Although no further surviving examples of metal tablets are known to date, the inscription of treaty texts on tablets made of precious metal can be assumed for the majority of the finalised treaties as is underlined by a passage from the Egyptian language version of the peace treaty between Ḫattušili III and Ramses II (*CTH* 91). The text, as inscribed on the stele of Karnak and the Ramesseum, states that it represents

⁵¹ See Hawkins 2000, 2: “Unlike the Mesopotamians the Hittites did not use their borrowed cuneiform script to write monumental inscriptions on stone.”

⁵² Otten 1988, 1.

⁵³ Neve 1987, 405ff.

the “copy of the silver tablet that the great king of Ḫatti, Ḫattušili” had brought to Egypt through his messenger.⁵⁴ Items made of precious metal generally have worse chances of survival in the archaeological record than those made of stone or other material due to the value of the material and its ability for re-modelling, so the situation of the evidence is not surprising.⁵⁵

Leaving aside the large gap in time that separates Anitta’s rule in Kaneš/Neša from the conclusion of the cited treaties during the Empire Period, a find from the Old Assyrian period already discussed, namely the Anitta ‘dagger’ (see above), shows that the technique for the incision of cuneiform script on metal objects was available during the reign of Anitta in Kaneš/Neša and that this was practiced.

A further piece of evidence can be added to the discussion and bridges the gap between the Old Assyrian and the Hittite Empire Period: a statement near the end of the Hittite version of the Annals of Ḫattušili I (CTH 4.II) states: *nu-za ki-i ALAM-IA ŠA KÜ.SIG₁₇ i-ia-nu-u[n] / na-at A-NA ^dUTU ^{ur}UTÚL-NA GAŠAN-IA ti-it-ta-nu-nu-un* “I made this, my golden statue and I set it up before the Sun-goddess of Arinna”.⁵⁶ This indicates that the annalistic account of the Old Hittite king was inscribed on a metal statue dedicated to the deity and placed in the temple.

The use of metal as material for tablets and artefacts for compositions that were of great importance to the authors, due to its valuable, aesthetic and durable characteristics is not singular to the Hittite sphere and is paralleled throughout Mesopotamia.

7 A Question of Purpose

The association of written sources of legal importance with the city gate is not surprising given the fact that this locality was considered a place of jurisdiction not only by the Hittites.⁵⁷ This is illustrated, for example, by the discovery of an Empire Period land donation tablet issued by Arnuwanda in the lower western gate.⁵⁸ Although written on sealed clay tablets⁵⁹ comparison with this text group offers an interesting parallel formulation to the wording in CTH 1 that might have further implications for the exact nature and purpose of the original Anitta inscription that served as the

⁵⁴ The term used is *’nw ḫd* “writing tablet of silver” (Edel 1997, 16/17 l. 3(4)).

⁵⁵ Cf. also Moorey 1994, 221 with reference to gold and silver.

⁵⁶ KBo 10, 2 iii 21–22 // KUB 23, 20 5’f.

⁵⁷ Cf. for example the statement in a Hittite law KBo 6, 26: *ták-ku-uš A-NA KÁ É. GAL ú-wa-te-ez-zi nu te-ez-zi* “If he brings them to the gate of the palace, and he speaks: ...”. For a discussion of the judicial importance of the gate in Ḫatti see Miller 2012, 276.

⁵⁸ Rüster/Wilhelm 2012, 231.

⁵⁹ The difference in material used might be explained by the fact that land donation tablets were issued for individuals and generally intended for safekeeping in archives.

basis for the first part of the Hittite Anitta text: a score transliteration of both extant manuscripts shows the penultimate sentence to read:

KBo 3, 22 obv. 34: *UR-RA-AM ŠE-^rRA-AM^r [x x x x (x) le-e ku]-^riš^r-ki ḫu-ul-[]*
KUB 36, 98a obv. 5': *[u]l-le-e-ez-zi*

This recalls the standard vindication formula of the land donation tablets, which usually appears in Akkadian as *urram šēram ana PN mamman lā iraggum* “for all eternity let no-one contest for PN”,⁶⁰ to the last part of which Hittite *lē kuiski ḫullezzi*, as reconstructed from the two parallel manuscripts provides an exact translation. In parallel with the remainder of the formula it is tempting to restore the complete phrase as

UR-RA-AM ŠE-RA-AM [a-na^{uru}ne-ša le-e ku]-iš-ki ḫu-ul-le-e-ez-zi
 “For all eternity no-one shall contest it for the city Neša.”⁶¹

This would suggest that the document in question might have to be understood as a decree issued by Anitta for the city Kaneš/Neša.

8 Concluding Remarks on the Implications of the Presence of a Hittite Anitta Text in the Archives of the Hittite Capital

The literary work known as the Proclamation of Anitta can be understood as a Hittite effort to concert information from pre-existing documents into a coherent historical narrative based around a common theme, or rather person. Especially when seen in connection with the transmission of texts such as the narrative surrounding Anum-ḫirwe or the Zalpa story this demonstrates a keen interest in the history of the Anatolian and Northern Syrian city states preceding the Hittite kingdom based on the capital Ḫattuša.

The apparent use of documents pre-dating the establishment of Ḫattuša as capital in the composition of these texts shows that copies or at least knowledge of said documents must have been accessible to the scribes of the early ‘Ḫattušaeen’⁶²

⁶⁰ Wilhelm 2012, 36, sub 3.

⁶¹ If Neu 1974 12’s restoration of *k[i-i tup-pí]* in the break is correct (he indicates that traces of the sign KI were still visible before the break, which I cannot make out on the photograph), the phrase would be a variation on this clause.

⁶² The term is used here in order to express a geographical aspect of this caesura rather than one of administration itself.

administration. The availability of these documents and the continuity in tradition necessitate a reconsideration of the circumstances of the introduction of cuneiform writing in Ḫattuša proper and lend credibility to the possibility that the reasons for the absence of written sources from the period preceding Ḫattušili I may have to be sought in a move of the capital city and with it the administration rather than an actual absence of writing. This seems particularly relevant in light of the fact that the important centre Kuššara remains as yet un-located and that texts written in a ductus differing from that of the Old Assyrian merchants have started to come to light in the Old Assyrian trading outposts.

Further, the impetus for the creation of a work such as the Anitta text suggests strong links between the early Hittite kings and the rulers of the pre-Hittite city-states and emerging larger political entities. The tradition of the text throughout the Hittite historic period, finally, underlines the significance of the composition as well as other historical compositions to the Hittite ruling class.

Abbreviations

CTH Laroche, Emanuel (1971), *Catalogue des Textes Hittites*, Paris.

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Daniel Lau

Die „Geierstele“ als luhmannsches Medium zur Legitimation des königlichen Herrschaftsanspruchs

Die Stele des Eanatum von Lagaš, in der Literatur auch als ‚Geierstele‘ bezeichnet, gehört zu den ältesten überlieferten historischen Dokumenten Mesopotamiens, die neben einer Inschrift auch eine bildliche Darstellung trägt.¹ In Bild und Schrift wird über einen Grenzkonflikt aus der Mitte des 3. Jt. v. Chr. berichtet, in dem es um Land- und Wassernutzungsrechte zwischen den beiden Stadtstaaten Lagaš und Umma geht und aus dem Eanatum siegreich hervorgeht.²

Die Stele ist seit ihrer Entdeckung im 19. Jahrhundert aufgrund ihrer Bedeutung häufig Gegenstand verschiedener philologischer und archäologischer Untersuchungen gewesen.³ Das in mehrere Teile fragmentierte und unvollständig erhaltene Monument wurde 1878 bei den französischen archäologischen Ausgrabungen in Tellō, dem antiken Girsu, gefunden. Die sieben überlieferten Bruchstücke der Stele fanden sich an verschiedenen Fundstellen verstreut. Die Fragmente D, E und F befanden sich in Tell K, die Fragmente A und C am Fuße derselben Fundstelle, Fragment B stammt aus Tell A, dort jedoch in sekundärer Lage, und Fragment G ist im Jahre 1900 vom British Museum auf dem Kunstmarkt erworben worden. Das letztgenannte Fragment mit der Inventarnummer BM 23580 wurde später vom British Museum an den Louvre gegeben und trägt nunmehr die Inventarnummer AO 16109. Heute befindet sich die

¹ Dieser Aufsatz stellt die überarbeitete und ergänzte Version meines Vortrags im Rahmen des Workshops „Materiality of Writing“ dar, der vom 17.–18. Mai 2013 in Heidelberg stattfand. Ich danke den Herausgebern für die Aufnahme meines Beitrags in den Sammelband zu den Ergebnissen dieser Tagung. Ich danke Thomas Balke für einen Literaturhinweis. Weiterhin danke ich Kerstin Hellmann und Nicole Grunert, frühere Versionen des Manuskriptes durchgesehen zu haben. Sämtliche verbleibenden Fehler sind selbstverständlich allein mir anzulasten.

² Eanatum von Lagaš ist der 3. Herrscher in einer dynastischen Abfolge nach Urnanše, dem Dynastiegründer, und Akurgal. Seine Regierungszeit liegt damit relativ am Anfang der Frühdynastischen Zeit IIIA um 2460 v. Chr., vgl. Alster 2003/2004, 9. Weitere Originalquellen zu diesem mehrere Generationen andauernden Grenzkonflikt diskutiert Cooper 1983, einen aktuellen Überblick bietet Kirchhofer 2002.

³ Hier sollen nur wenige Werke beispielhaft genannt werden: Heuzey 1884. Sarzec/Heuzey 1884–1912, 36, 68, 94–103, 174–195; Heuzey/Thureau-Dangin 1909; Pancritius 1909; Barrelet 1970; Solberger/Kupper 1971; Börker-Klähn 1982, 9, 16–17, 124–125 Nr. 17; Steible 1982, 120–145; Cooper 1983; Winter 1985; Winter 1986; Braun-Holzinger 1991, 335–336 Stele 7, Alster 2003–2004; Braun-Holzinger 2007, FD9; Frayne 2008, 126–140; Zu weiteren Bearbeitungen siehe auch Steible 1982, 120 und Alster 2003–2004, 9–10.

rekonstruierte Stele im Louvre, Paris, die Fragmente sind mit den Inventarnummern AO 50, 2346, 2347, 2348, 16109 versehen.

Im Rahmen dieses Beitrags soll die Stele als beispielhaftes Medium für die Möglichkeiten einer Anwendung der Kommunikationstheorien Niklas Luhmanns in der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie herangezogen werden. Nach einem kurzen Abschnitt zum Material und dem Aufstellungsort der Stele (1.) stelle ich anschließend Grundbegriffe der luhmannschen Systemtheorie vor (2.) und wende das Kommunikationsmodell auf die ‚Geierstelen‘ an (3.). Damit soll ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der machtvollen Kommunikation im Rahmen der Herrschaftslegitimation in der jünger frühdynastischen Zeit geleistet werden.

1 Material und Aufstellungsort

Eine Interpretation der ‚Geierstelen‘ kann nur dann vollständig sein, wenn sie eine Betrachtung des Bild- und Schriftträgers hinsichtlich seines Materials, seiner Dimensionen und seiner Gestalt einschließt. Folgt man den Beschreibungen in der Literatur, so besteht die ‚Geierstelen‘ aus Kalkstein,⁴ ohne die spezifische Art des Gesteins genauer zu differenzieren. Obschon die Bearbeitung von (Kalk-)Stein, um daraus ein Relief zu fertigen und/oder Text einzugravieren, zur Zeit Eanatums eine längere Tradition hatte, müssen für den Fertigungsprozess dennoch ausgebildete Spezialisten beauftragt worden sein, die neben dem handwerklichen Geschick und Wissen um die Ikonographie ebenfalls über das zur Bearbeitung notwendige Werkzeug verfügten.⁵ Die Fertigung eines Monumentes aus Stein wird gewählt worden sein, da das Material dauerhafter, schwerer, wertvoller und damit repräsentativer war als beispielsweise der einfacher zu bearbeitende und nahezu überall verfügbare Lehm.⁶

Die bislang entdeckten sieben Fragmente der ‚Geierstelen‘ werden zu einer Gesamthöhe von 180 cm und einer Gesamtbreite von 130 cm rekonstruiert, mit einer Tiefe von 11 cm (Abb. 1).⁷ Das spezifische Gewicht von Kalkstein beträgt im Mittel 2,7 g/cm³. Unter Berücksichtigung der für die Rekonstruktion der Stele angenommenen Dimensionen ergibt sich damit ein geschätztes Gewicht von $2,7 \text{ g} \times 257.400 \text{ cm}^3 = 694,98 \text{ kg}$. Ein Objekt von rund 700 kg Gewicht kann nur von einer kleinen Gruppe Menschen oder unter Zuhilfenahme von Zugtieren, eines Wagens oder auf einem Wasserfahrzeug bewegt werden, so dass ein fester Aufstellungsort für die Stele angenommen werden kann. Die Mehrzahl der Fragmente wurde in Tellō, Tell K oder an seinem Fuße gefunden, lediglich Fragment B stammt von Tell A, dort jedoch in sekundärer, also

⁴ Vgl. beispielsweise Orthmann 1975, 189.

⁵ Vgl. Alster 2003–2004, 4.

⁶ Vgl. dazu auch Hockmann 2008, 335; Gelb/Steinkeller/Whiting 1991, 21.

⁷ Nach Orthmann 1975, 189–190 Taf. 89b, 90–91.



Abb. 1: Geierstele des Eanatum (Rückseite)

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verlagerter Fundlage und Fragment G stammt aus dem Kunsthandel, hier ist der ursprüngliche Fundort nicht mehr nachzuvollziehen. Parrot nimmt daher an, dass die Stele vor dem Tempel des Ningirsu in Tellō (Tell K) stand und auch Braun-Holzinger versteht die Stele als Siegestele, die im Tempel geweiht wurde und demnach dort ihren Standort hatte.⁸

Berücksichtigt man jedoch die Vorgeschichte des Grenzkonflikts zwischen den Stadtstaaten von Lagaš und Umma, so wird in verschiedenen Inschriften mehrfach ein Denkmal des Mesilim erwähnt, das an der Grenze aufgestellt war und durch den Herrscher von Umma bei Überschreitung der Grenze zerstört wurde. Gleichfalls wird auch von einer oder mehreren Stelen/Monumenten berichtet, die Eanatum an der Grenze aufstellen ließ.⁹ Und Inschriften des EnME.Tena erwähnen neben einer Grenzstele sogar eine Art von Grenzwall (im-dub-ba) des Ningirsu, auf dem drei Postamente für die Götter errichtet wurden.¹⁰

Es ist folglich nicht unwahrscheinlich, dass der ursprüngliche Standort der ‚Geierstele‘ oder einer Kopie¹¹ an dieser Grenze zwischen Lagaš und Umma lag. Auch Orthmann stellt die Möglichkeit zur Diskussion, dass es sich bei der ‚Geierstele‘ um eine Grenzstele handeln könnte, verwirft aber den Gedanken, da er es für „unverständlich [hält], wie es [das Denkmal] von der Landesgrenze in den Tempelbezirk von Girsu, seinen Fundort, gelangte.“¹²

⁸ Siehe Parrot 1948, 95–101; Braun-Holzinger 2007, 48.

⁹ Auf zwei Flusskieseln und zwei Tongefäßfragmenten aus der Zeit des Eanatums, vgl. Cooper 1983, 48 sowie auf zwei Lehmobjekten aus der Zeit des Entemena, ebd. 49–50 und auf beschrifteten Objekten aus der Zeit des Lugalzagesi, ebd. 52–53. Auf Grenzmonumente wird auch auf der ‚Geierstele‘ direkt Bezug genommen, ebd. 45–47.

¹⁰ Siehe Ent. 28/29 (Tonkegel-/Gefäßinschrift); – Für diesen Hinweis danke ich Thomas Balke.

¹¹ Zur Deutung, dass die sieben Fragmente aus Tellō von unterschiedlichen Stelen stammen vgl. Barrelet 1970. Die Anfertigung von Kopien/Dopplungen wichtiger Steinartefakte ist beispielsweise auch durch die wesentlich ältere ‚Kultvase‘ von Uruk belegt, vgl. Hockmann 2008, 326 Anm. 2.

¹² Orthmann 1975, 189.

Hinsichtlich der von ihrem ursprünglichen Aufstellungsort in Sippar über 400 Kilometer nach Susa entrückten Hammurapi-Stele oder der Naram Sin-Stele ist es vorstellbar, dass auch die ‚Geierstele‘ von ihrem Standort an der Grenze zwischen Lagaš und Umma aus fortbewegt wurde, freilich nicht als Teil einer Beutekunst, wie es bei den beiden erstgenannten Stelen im 12. Jh. v. Chr. zur Zeit des Šutruk-naḫḫunte II. der Fall gewesen ist.¹³ Nimmt man an, dass die ‚Geierstele‘ intakt transportiert wurde, dann ist es denkbar, dass die Stele ihre ursprüngliche Funktion als Grenzmonument eingebüßt hatte und daher in den Tempelbezirk des Ningirsu verbracht wurde, um dort aufbewahrt oder kultisch archiviert zu werden. Dabei wird sicherlich die Bewahrung von Legitimationsansprüchen an Land- und Wassernutzungsrechten zugrunde gelegt werden können.

Sollte die Stele jedoch zerstört worden sein, wie es mehrfach und so auch für die von Eanatum errichteten Monumente inschriftlich erwähnt ist,¹⁴ erweist sich ein Transport der Fragmente als erheblich weniger aufwendig. Ikonoklasmus im Sinne einer beabsichtigten Zerstörung eines Bild- und/oder Schriftmonuments ist in der Frühdynastischen Zeit in Mesopotamien belegt und nicht unüblich gewesen.¹⁵ Die Zerstörung von Visualisierungen politischer oder religiöser Macht ist immer gleichbedeutend mit einer Zerstörung des Systems, das die Bilder/Texte geschaffen hat und geht sehr häufig mit Territorialkonflikten einher.¹⁶ Der Ikonoklast ist dabei stets mit einem gegnerischen Herrscher zu identifizieren, im Falle des Grenzkonfliktes also mit dem Herrscher von Umma, wie es mehrfach auch inschriftlich belegt ist.¹⁷ Eine Untersuchung der Fragmente auf Spuren einer gewaltsamen Zerstörung könnte für die Klärung dieser These sehr aufschlussreich sein.¹⁸

Für den weiteren Verlauf der Diskussion ist es jedoch wenig entscheidend, wo sich der ursprüngliche Aufstellungsort der Stele befand. Hinsichtlich der Aufstellungsweise lässt die zerstörte und nicht erhaltene Basis der Stele keine Rückschlüsse zu. Da sowohl Vorder- und Rückseite als auch die Schmalseiten der Stele mit Reliefs verziert, bzw. beschriftet sind, ist nur an eine freistehende Aufstellung zu denken, die es gestattete, um die Stele herum zu gehen, um alle vier Seiten zu betrachten und lesen zu können. Ein, wenngleich schlechter gearbeiteter und kleinerer Vorläufer zur

13 Differenzierter dazu Bahrani 1995.

14 Vgl. Anm. 9.

15 Vgl. May 2012. Auch die auf der ‚Geierstele‘ angeführte Fluchformel, die denjenigen treffen soll, der diese Stele zerstören will, weist indirekt auf den Sachverhalt hin, dass Bildwerke bereits absichtsvoll zerstört wurden. Vgl. dazu auch Selz 2002, 168 FN 38.

16 Vgl. May 2012, 6, 11–12. Zu den Gründen des Ikonoklasmus siehe auch Bahrani 1995.

17 Vgl. dazu Anm. 9.

18 Eine computertomographische Aufnahme der Fragmente könnte nicht nur bei der Beantwortung dieser Frage helfen, sondern anhand einer Analyse der Gesteinsstruktur könnte eventuell auch geklärt werden, ob die Fragmente von derselben oder von unterschiedlichen Stelen stammen, vgl. Anm. 11.

‚Geierstele‘ ist die ebenfalls in Tellō gefundene Stele des Urnanše.¹⁹ Die abgerundete Form der Stele und die Verzierung mit Bild und Text auf allen vier sichtbaren Seiten knüpft demnach an Traditionen innerhalb der Dynastie von Lagaš an und sollen an dieser Stelle nicht weiter diskutiert werden.

Sowohl die schriftliche als auch die bildliche Darstellung auf der ‚Geierstele‘ ist hinlänglich bekannt, so dass hier nochmals auf die umfangreiche Literatur verwiesen sei.²⁰ Im nächsten Abschnitt (2.) wird daher direkt mit einer Betrachtung der Systemtheorie Niklas Luhmanns fortgefahren. Nach einer kurzen Einleitung zu dieser Theorie wird in einem weiteren Schritt (3.) die ‚Geierstele‘ in ihrer Funktion als Medium der Kommunikation untersucht.

2 Luhmanns Systemtheorie

Zunächst ist es notwendig einige Begriffe zu definieren, die zentral für Luhmanns Systemtheorie sind, nämlich: System, Autopoiesis und Kommunikation.²¹ Luhmann unterscheidet drei Kategorien von Systemen: Biologische (Organismen, Zellen usw.), psychische (das menschliche Bewusstsein) und soziale. Ein System grenzt sich nach Luhmanns Definition durch Operationen von seiner chaotischen Umwelt ab und reproduziert sich durch diese Operationen.²² Operationen hinsichtlich der drei Systeme nach Luhmann sind: Bei biologischen Systemen das Leben, psychische Systeme operieren durch Bewusstseins- und Wahrnehmungsprozesse und soziale Systeme kommunizieren.²³ Die für den Fortbestand eines Systems notwendige Selbstreproduktion nennt Luhmann Autopoiesis.²⁴ Im Weiteren sollen biologische und psychische Systeme unberücksichtigt bleiben und der Fokus auf die sozialen Systeme gelenkt werden. Ein soziales System besteht nach Luhmann durch seine Differenz von der Umwelt und durch Autopoiesis aufgrund von Kommunikation:

Die allgemeine Theorie autopoietischer Systeme verlangt eine genaue Angabe derjenigen Operation, die die Autopoiesis des Systems durchführt und damit ein System gegen seine Umwelt abgrenzt. Im Falle sozialer Systeme geschieht dies durch Kommunikation.²⁵

¹⁹ Orthmann 1975, 188 Taf. 84.

²⁰ Vgl. Anm. 5.

²¹ Vgl. Luhmann 1984, 16. Ders. 1997, 24 Anm. 14.

²² Vgl. Luhmann 1994, 8–9 und 1997 45, 77, 182. An dieser Stelle kann nicht ausführlicher auf die komplexen Wechselwirkungen zwischen System, Umwelt und Operationen eingegangen werden.

²³ Vgl. Luhmann 1984, 355.

²⁴ Vgl. ebd. 28. Luhmann 1997, 79, 97.

²⁵ Ebd. 81. Vgl. auch Luhmann 1984, 192.

Die Kommunikationsprozesse sind das Kernthema der luhmannschen Theorie. Nach Luhmann ist es nicht der Sender (bei ihm ‚alter‘ genannt) einer Botschaft, sondern der Empfänger (‚ego‘ genannt), der Kommunikation erst möglich werden lässt.²⁶ Damit verschiebt sich die Bedeutung oder das Gewicht im Kommunikationsprozess vom Senden einer Nachricht hin zum Verstehen einer Nachricht. Erst durch die Sinnerschließung ‚egos‘ findet nach Luhmann eine Kommunikation statt. Kommunikation funktioniert nach Luhmann über drei Schritte, in denen Selektivität die bedeutende Rolle spielt:²⁷

1. ‚Alter‘ wählt aus seiner Umwelt eine Information aus, selektiert also aus dem ungeordneten Chaos und reduziert damit die Komplexität seiner eigenen Umwelt auf diese spezifische Information.
2. ‚Alter‘ selektiert in einem zweiten Prozess aus dem gesamten Umfang der zur Verfügung stehenden, zuvor (1.) aus der Umwelt reduzierten, Information eine Botschaft oder Nachricht, die übermittelt werden soll.
3. ‚Ego‘ selektiert aus der Nachricht (2.) ‚alters‘, in dem Sinne, dass die Nachricht verstanden bzw. angenommen wird oder nicht. Wird die Nachricht angenommen erkennt ‚ego‘, dass es sich bei der Mitteilung ‚alters‘ um eine sinnergebende Nachricht handelt und diese durch doppelte Selektion (1. + 2.) in ihrer Komplexität reduziert ist. ‚Ego‘ versteht, dass nicht die gesamte mögliche Information zur Verfügung steht, da sie durch ‚alter‘ mehreren ‚Filterprozessen‘ unterzogen war. Mit Abschluss der Selektion durch ‚ego‘ findet eine Kommunikation statt und reproduziert dadurch das System ‚alters‘.

Zusammengefasst schreibt Luhmann dazu, dass Kommunikation ein dreistelliger Selektionsprozess sei: „Begrift man Kommunikation als Synthese dreier Selektionen, als Einheit aus Information, Mitteilung und Verstehen, so ist die Kommunikation realisiert, wenn und soweit das Verstehen zustandekommt.“²⁸

Nach der Begriffsklärung ist es notwendig noch einen weiteren Aspekt des Kommunikationsmodells nach Luhmann anzuführen: Luhmann geht davon aus, dass die im Kommunikationsprozess getroffenen Selektionen beliebig kontingent sind und damit Kommunikation unwahrscheinlich werden lässt.²⁹ Diese Beliebigkeit in den Selektionen kann durch die Wahl geeigneter Medien eingegrenzt werden, so dass Kommunikation wahrscheinlicher wird. Drei Arten von Medien werden nach Luhmann dabei unterschieden: 1. Sprache, 2. Verbreitungsmedien, wie beispiels-

²⁶ Vgl. Luhmann 1997, 97, 259, 291.

²⁷ „Kommunikation ist Prozessieren von Selektion“ (Luhmann 1984, 194).

²⁸ Luhmann 203. Zum Abschluss einer Kommunikation durch Verstehen der Mitteilung vgl. Luhmann 1997, 259.

²⁹ Vgl. Luhmann 1981 und 1997, 190–193.

weise Schrift, und 3. generalisierte symbolische Medien, die auch Erfolgsmedien genannt werden, wie Kunst, Macht oder Moralvorstellungen.³⁰

Im letzten Teil (3.) soll gezeigt werden, dass die ‚Geierstele‘ als eine Visualisierung des generalisierten Kommunikationsmediums ‚Macht‘ fungiert, die das politische System Lagaš, repräsentiert durch Eanatum, perpetuiert.

3 Machtvolle Kommunikation

Im Folgenden soll nun der Versuch unternommen werden das Kommunikationsmodell der Systemtheorie Luhmanns auf die Verhältnisse im alten Mesopotamien zu übertragen, konkret dargestellt anhand der ‚Geierstele‘.

Das der ‚Geierstele‘ zugrunde liegende System ist der Stadtstaat Lagaš, repräsentiert durch den Herrscher Eanatum; es ist demnach ein politisches System. Herrscher und Staat können nur durch Autopoiesis, die durch Kommunikationsprozesse erfolgt, fortbestehen. Kommunikation in politischen Systemen funktioniert über das generalisierte Kommunikationsmedium Macht,³¹ das nach Luhmann die Wahrscheinlichkeit einer erfolgreichen Kommunikation erhöht.

Die Bedeutung von Macht in einem Kommunikationsprozess ist zweifach: Zunächst besteht das Mitteilungshandeln des Machthabers darin, eine Befolgung seiner Handlungsaufforderung seitens des Machtunterworfenen zu erzielen.³² In dem hier behandelten Fall des Grenzkonflikts geht die machtvolle Kommunikation von Eanatum (dem Machthaber) aus: Eanatum verlangt von Umma, repräsentiert durch den Herrscher (dem Machtunterworfenen), die Grenze zwischen beiden Stadtstaaten anzuerkennen und damit einzuhalten. Wenn sich Umma an diese Handlungsaufforderung hält, wird die Macht Eanatums (und damit die von Lagaš) anerkannt. Eine Kommunikation findet statt und das politische System des Eanatum wird dadurch rekreiert, erhalten und zugleich legitimiert.

Eine Zuwiderhandlung muss der Machthaber gegenüber dem Machtunterworfenen sanktionieren. Es ist hier wichtig zu betonen, dass negative Sanktionen angedroht werden müssen, da positive Sanktionen keine hinreichende Motivation für den Machtunterdrückten darstellen sich dem Willen des Machthabers zu fügen, da sich im Falle einer Zuwiderhandlung seine eigene Position (die des Machtunterdrückten) nicht verändern würde.³³ Auf diese Weise wird ein zweiter Kommunikationsverlauf eröffnet, der von keiner der beiden Seiten gewünscht sein kann, jedoch für den Machthaber weniger negative Konsequenzen haben wird als für den Machtunterworfenen.

³⁰ Vgl. Luhmann 1984, 220 und 1997, 44, 190.

³¹ Vgl. Brodocz 2012.

³² Zu machtvollen Kommunikationen bei Luhmann vgl. Brodocz 2012 passim.

³³ Vgl. Brodocz 2012 passim.

Im konkreten Fall droht bei Eidbruch des Herrschers von Umma die Vernichtung seines Stadtstaates und seiner Bewohner durch den Zorn der Götter,³⁴ eine Situation, die für Umma nicht erstrebenswert sein kann und aufgrund des Eidbruchs zunächst auch negative Folgen für Lagaš hätte, da die Grenze und die Rechte an Wasser- und Landnutzung seitens Umma erneut verletzt würden.

Voraussetzung für den Machterhalt eines Systems ist seine Legitimation, konkret also die Rechtfertigung des Herrschaftsanspruchs Eanatums. Dieser wird sowohl im Text als auch im Bildprogramm der ‚Geierstele‘ eindeutig herausgearbeitet, wie in den folgenden Abschnitten kurz referiert werden soll.

4 Die Funktion des Textes

Eine wörtliche Wiedergabe der Inschrift ist an dieser Stelle nicht möglich, so dass auf die bestehenden Übersetzungen³⁵ verwiesen wird und der Inhalt hier zusammengefasst werden soll: Der Text beschreibt zunächst die Vorgeschichte der Ereignisse des durch weitere Inschriften gut bezeugten Grenzkonflikts zwischen den Stadtstaaten Lagaš und Umma.³⁶

Nach Steible legitimiert sich der mesopotamische Herrschaftsanspruch im 3. Jt. v. Chr. durch Gotteskindschaft, göttliche Erwählung, Dynastienfolge und durch eigene Leistungen.³⁷ Alle vier Aspekte werden in der Inschrift auf der ‚Geierstele‘ angesprochen und legitimieren den Herrschaftsanspruch Eanatums damit hinreichend.

Die dynastische Folge wird zu Beginn der erhaltenen Inschrift angedeutet durch die Filiation der Herrscher Akurgal und Urnanše, des Vaters und Großvaters Eanatums, die beide ihrerseits Regenten von Lagaš waren. Wenngleich der Stadtgott Ningirsu als eigentlicher Garant für die Legitimation Eanatums in der Inschrift in Erscheinung tritt, so verweist die Textstelle „Ningirsu, Held des Enlil“³⁸ auf den höchsten regionalübergreifenden Gott des frühdynastischen Pantheons und legitimiert Eanatum damit indirekt durch Enlil selbst. Gleichzeitig ist die ehemals durch Enlil gesetzte Grenze zwischen den beiden Stadtstaaten Lagaš und Umma verletzt worden, so dass göttlich geltendes Recht verletzt wurde und damit eine kriegerische Intervention seitens Eanatums gerechtfertigt wurde.³⁹

³⁴ In der ‚Geierstele‘ werden die Konsequenzen eines Eidbruchs inschriftlich und bildlich repräsentiert durch das Fangnetz, das über Umma ausgeworfen wird. Vgl. dazu auch Selz 2002, 167 FN 37.

³⁵ Zum Beispiel: Sollberger/Kupper 1971; Steible 1982; Cooper 1983; Frayne 2008.

³⁶ Cooper 1983; Kirchhofer 2002.

³⁷ Steible 2001.

³⁸ Ean. 1, IV 4–5; Steible 1982, 122.

³⁹ Dies geht aus den anderen den Grenzkonflikten betreffenden Inschriften hervor, siehe dazu Cooper 1983.

Über göttliche Intervention bei der Zeugung und Geburt des Eanatums gibt die Stele ebenfalls Auskunft. Der Samen im Mutterleib, der Eanatum hervorbrachte, wurde von Ninġirsu eingepflanzt. Seinen Namen erhält Eanatum von Inanna und Ninġursaġ schließlich nährte ihn an ihrer rechten Brust. Nach der Geburt wird Eanatum von Ninġirsu ‚vermessen‘ und erhält von diesem daraufhin die Regentschaft über Lagaš.⁴⁰

Ninġirsu erscheint Eanatum im Traum und erteilt ihm den Auftrag gegen Umma vorzugehen. Zusätzlich zu diesem göttlichen Auftrag wird Eanatum an seiner Stirn gezeichnet – als sichtbares Symbol des göttlichen Auftrages.⁴¹

Die auf den Traum folgenden Abschnitte der Inschrift beschreiben die Schlacht auf dem Feld vor und in der Stadt Umma. Obwohl Eanatum von einem feindlichen Pfeil getroffen und verwundet wird, wütet er wie ein Regensturm in Umma. Dazu passt auch, dass Eanatum im Text mehrfach durch Attribute wie ‚mächtig‘ und ‚stark‘ ausgezeichnet wird – allesamt herausragende körperliche Eigenschaften, die seinen Herrschaftsanspruch legitimieren.

Doch nicht nur physische Überlegenheit zeichnet einen rechtmäßigen Herrscher in der frühdynastischen Zeit aus, gleichermaßen sind es Aspekte, als weiser und gnädiger Herrscher in Erscheinung zu treten.⁴² Nach der Schlacht zeigt sich Eanatum als weiser Regent und okkupiert nicht das Land Ummas, sondern stellt vielmehr die durch das Wirken Ummas gestörte göttliche Ordnung wieder her, restauriert das Grenzmonument des Mesilim, zieht einen Grenzkanal und errichtet weitere Grenzmonumente. Für die gefallenen Krieger aus Umma lässt er 20 Grabhügel errichten.⁴³

Einen großen Teil der Inschrift nehmen die Götterschwüre ein, die in gleicher oder leicht abgewandelter Form mehrmals wiederholt werden. In diesen muss der Herrscher Ummas über das Fangnetz des jeweils angerufenen Gottes schwören, die wiederhergestellte Grenze zukünftig nicht mehr zu verletzen, da sonst Sanktionen der Götter drohen, Umma zu vernichten. Die Götter die hier beschworen werden sind in der Reihenfolge ihrer Erwähnung Enlil, Ninġursaġ, Enki, Suen, Utu und Ninkī. Dies sind die Sanktionen, die einen zweiten Kanal in der machtvollen Kommunikation zwischen Lagaš und Umma öffnen und einen Garant für die Erhaltung der Macht Eanatums darstellen.

Erinnern wir uns an die Medien, die nach Luhmann Kommunikation wahrscheinlich machen, so wird an erster Stelle und gleichsam als Grundlage einer erfolgreichen Kommunikation die Sprache angeführt. Die Inschrift auf der ‚Geierstele‘ repräsentiert das Medium Sprache. Es ist davon auszugehen, dass der Text, wenn er einem

⁴⁰ Ean. 1, IV 9–V 31; Steible 1982, 122–124.

⁴¹ Ean. 1, VI 25–VII 11; Steible 1982, 125.

⁴² Siehe zum herrschaftlichen Aspekt des weisen Herrschers und guten Hirten Selz 2001.

⁴³ Ean. 1, XI 14; Steible 1982, 127.

Rezipienten lesbar war, laut vorgelesen wurde.⁴⁴ Das laute Lesen als wieder hörbar, für Zuhörer also erfahrbar machen des gesprochenen Wortes – und im Falle der ‚Geierstele‘ handelt es sich sowohl um das gesprochene Wort des Eanatums, als auch hinsichtlich der dramaturgischen Entwicklung des Textes um den Schwur des Herrschers von Umma vor den Göttern – rekreiert die Legitimationsgründe des Herrschaftsanspruchs Eanatums und erneuert die Götterschwüre des Herrschers von Umma.⁴⁵ Denn das Medium Sprache „wird durch Gebrauch nicht verbraucht, sondern im Gegenteil erneuert und wieder verfügbar gemacht“.⁴⁶

Sprache erschafft eine zweite Realität, indem sie es gestattet ein alternatives Raum-Zeitgefüge zu beschreiben. Es entsteht eine Differenz von „realer Realität und semiotischer Realität“.⁴⁷ Mächtiger als die Sprache noch ist in diesem Zusammenhang die Schrift, da sie Sprache kodifiziert und damit ein wiederholtes, fehlerfreies und perpetuierendes Rezitieren des Gesprochenen über Zeiten und Räume hinweg ermöglicht. „Die Schrift erzeugt eine neuartige Präsenz von Zeit, nämlich die Illusion der Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen. Die bloß virtuelle Zeit der Vergangenheit und der Zukunft ist in jeder Gegenwart präsent, obwohl sie für etwas ganz anderes gleichzeitig ist als für die Gegenwart“.⁴⁸

Die Schrift fixiert die sprachliche und in diesem Falle machtvolle Kommunikation, sie erschafft ein soziales Gedächtnis und hat Archivcharakter, solange der Schriftträger Bestand hat. Im Falle der ‚Geierstele‘ wird durch das Trägermaterial Kalkstein ein Fortbestehen für alle Zeiten konstatiert. Archiviert werden auf dem Monument der Herrschaftsanspruch Eanatums und die vor den Göttern geleisteten Schwüre des machtunterworfenen Herrschers von Umma. Durch lautes Vorlesen werden diese Aspekte wie gezeigt aktiviert und erneuert – diese Aktivierung ist im Rahmen einer regelmäßigen stattfindenden Performance denkbar, beispielsweise einer Gedenkfeierlichkeit.

⁴⁴ Lesen heißt akk. *šašû*, sum. *gù-dé*, mit der Grundbedeutung ‚rufen‘. Bei einer Betrachtung der antiken Lesekultur zeigt sich, dass Texte fast ausschließlich laut gelesen wurden, vgl. Busch 2002. Claus Wilcke 2000, 48 geht davon aus, dass bereits in der Ur III-Zeit, in ihren Anfängen vielleicht bereits in der Akkadzeit, weite Teile der städtischen Bevölkerung des Lesens und Schreibens mächtig waren.

⁴⁵ Vgl. Wilcke 2000 *passim*.

⁴⁶ Luhmann 2002, 84.

⁴⁷ Luhmann 1997, 218.

⁴⁸ Luhmann 1997, 265.

5 Die Funktion des Bildprogramms

Die beiden Seiten der Stele werden aufgrund ihrer bildlichen Darstellungen in der Forschung in eine ‚weltliche-historische‘ und in eine ‚mythologische‘ Seite unterteilt.⁴⁹ Die ‚weltliche‘ Seite zeigt das Kriegsgeschehen zwischen den verfeindeten Truppen von Lagaš und Umma, das mit einem Sieg im oberen Register der Stele zugunsten Eanatums endet.⁵⁰ Die ‚mythologische‘ Seite der Stele zeigt prominent eine bärtige männliche Gestalt, die zumeist mit der Repräsentation Ningirsus identifiziert wird.⁵¹ Der Gott hält in einer Hand ein Netz mit Menschen, auf das er mit einer Keule einschlägt. Eindeutig wird hier ein Bezug auf das Fangnetz genommen, das inschriftlich erwähnt wird und vor dem der Herrscher von Umma seine Eide vor den Göttern ablegen muss.

Die ‚weltliche‘ Seite der ‚Geierstele‘ hat die Funktion, die Legitimation Eanatums aufgrund seiner Taten zu rekreieren. Die bildliche Darstellung zeigt die siegreiche Auseinandersetzung gegen den benachbarten Stadtstaat Umma und den König bei einer Opferzeremonie sowie dem Aufschütten von Grabhügeln, so dass hier die Prototypen eines erfolgreichen Kriegers aber auch eines frommen und nachsichtigen Regenten abgebildet werden.

Selz verweist auf die Realpräsenz des/der Abgebildeten im Bild.⁵² Das Bild im alten Mesopotamien habe eine „substanzlogische Teilhabe“ an seinem Ursprung.⁵³ Gleichzeitig bilden Darstellungen nur „Stereotype“ bzw. „Typen“, keinesfalls jedoch Portraits ab, mit dem Zweck ein „inneres Bild“ zu evozieren.⁵⁴ Nach Braun-Holzinger ist der Herrscher in der Ikonographie der Frühdynastischen Zeit lediglich durch sein Handeln von anderen Figuren zu unterscheiden, selten ist er größer dargestellt oder besser ausgerüstet.⁵⁵ Die bildlichen Darstellungen auf der ‚Geierstele‘ fixieren demnach ein Stereotyp der Imagination bestimmter Ideale. Sie zeigen den ‚Herrscher‘, den ‚Sieg‘, die ‚Niederlage‘, die ‚Dankopfer‘ usw. Demnach ist diese Seite trotz ihrer Verknüpfung mit den historischen Ereignissen nicht als Tätigkeitsbericht zu bezeichnen, sondern vielmehr als idealtypische Darstellung der Tugenden eines rechtschaffenen Herrschers.

⁴⁹ Vgl. Orthmann 1975, 189.

⁵⁰ Zur Lesung sumerischer Bildprogramme von unten nach oben siehe Alster 2003–2004; kritisch dazu Braun-Holzinger 2007, 48 FN 79.

⁵¹ Vgl. z. B. Braun-Holzinger 2007, 48.

⁵² Selz 2001, 11.

⁵³ Salz 2001, 12. Vgl. dazu auch die Definition von „Fetisch“ im Sinne Bahrans 1995, 365, 375, als Re-Präsentation des Abgebildeten, die dort auf Rundbilder bezogen ist, hier aber auf bildliche Darstellungen im Flachbild übertragen werden soll.

⁵⁴ Selz 2001, 12.

⁵⁵ Braun-Holzinger 2007, 65.

Ergänzend und personalisierend tritt jedoch hinzu, dass der in Stein geschlagene Name, der mit der Repräsentation des Herrschers verknüpft ist, eine Erinnerung an ihn auch nach seinem Tod aufrechterhält. Name und Bild des Eanatum garantieren dem Herrscher damit ein metaphysisches Weiterleben nach dem Tod.⁵⁶ Das Monument dient neben der Repräsentation der Tugenden des Herrschers auch als Referenz für eine Erinnerung an ihn.⁵⁷ Aus eben diesem Grund dürfte auch für die Gegner keine Namensnennung erfolgt sein.⁵⁸

Die Darstellungen auf der ‚mythologischen‘ Seite der ‚Geierstele‘ zeigen möglicherweise Ningirsu, wie er das aus der Inschrift erwähnte Fangnetz hält, darin gefangen sind Menschen zu sehen, die vermutlich die Leute aus Umma repräsentieren sollen. Das Motiv des Fangnetzes nimmt Sargon von Akkade in einer Stele auf.⁵⁹ Weitere weibliche Götter sind abgebildet, aufgrund der starken Fragmentierung erlauben die erkennbaren Bilder jedoch keine Zusammenhängende oder sicher deutbare Szene zu rekonstruieren.

Die Hauptdarstellung auf der ‚mythologischen‘ Seite symbolisiert die Folgen der göttlichen Sanktionen bei Eidbruch des Regenten von Umma. Damit halten Sie dem Betrachter die Konsequenzen einer Grenzverletzung vor Augen und erhalten die machtvoll Kommunikation.⁶⁰

Es wird vorgeschlagen, die ‚Geierstele‘ als Grenzstele oder zumindest als Vertrag⁶¹ zu verstehen und die bislang als ‚weltlich-historisch‘ bzw. ‚mythologisch‘ genannten Seiten der Stele nunmehr als ‚Lagaš-‘ und ‚Umma-‘-Seiten zu bezeichnen. Die vormaligen ‚weltlich-historischen‘ Seite stellt dabei die Lagaš-Seite dar, da sie die Tugenden des Königs herausstellt und auch inschriftlich gesehen seine Erfolge referiert und den Namen der Stele angibt. Entsprechend ist die ‚mythologische‘ Seite als Umma-Seite anzusehen, da der Text hier einsetzt, die Rechtfertigungen für das Handeln Eanatums darstellt, die bei den Göttern zu leistenden Eide des Königs von Umma enthält und zugleich die bildliche Darstellung der Konsequenzen bei Eidbruch anzeigt. Die Eide sind es auch, die eine inhaltliche Verbindung beider Seiten herstellen.

⁵⁶ Es ist davon auszugehen, dass die Namensnennung eine hinreichende Denotation der Königsdarstellung bewirkt, so dass hier kein *Abbild* sondern eine *Repräsentation* im Sinne Bonatz 2002 vorliegt. Nach Bonatz bedarf eine Repräsentation nicht der Ähnlichkeit zu dem Dargestellten, wenn das Dargestellte denotiert ist, also zwischen dem Benutzer und der Darstellung eine erkennende Bindung besteht (Bonatz 2002, 13).

⁵⁷ May 2012, 5.

⁵⁸ Vgl. Winter 1986, 205–212.

⁵⁹ Vgl. Orthmann, 1975, 195 Taf. 100. Braun-Holzinger 1991, 258. Dies. 2007, 90–91; 101 Taf. 38.

⁶⁰ Diese Interpretation steht im Gegensatz zu der Meinung, dass auf der ‚mythologischen‘ Seite das Eingreifen der Götter in die Schlacht zwischen Lagaš und Umma abgebildet sei und dadurch der Sieg als „Göttergeschenk“ zu verstehen ist, vgl. Cwik-Rosenbach 1990, 6; beziehungsweise, dass hier siegreiche Götter dargestellt werden, vgl. Braun-Holzinger 2007, 48.

⁶¹ Zur Deutung als Vertrag bereits Selz 2002, 167.

Bild und Schrift sind untrennbar miteinander verwoben und verstärken sich gegenseitig hinsichtlich ihrer Bedeutung.⁶² Die ‚Geierstele‘ dient als Bild- und Schriftträger, gleichsam als in beständigen Stein geschlagener Vertrag zwischen Lagaš und Umma, d. h. als die Bewahrung der gemeinsamen Grenze dieser beider Stadtstaaten. Dieser Vertrag ist bedingt durch die machtvolle Kommunikation, die von Eanatum ausgeht, und so lange das politische System Lagaš besteht, eben diese Vereinbarung beständig perpetuiert. Die ‚Geierstele‘ fungiert damit als Visualisierung des luhmannschen generalisierten Kommunikationsmediums Macht und legitimiert gleichzeitig kraft ihres Materials, der Inschrift und des dargestellten Bildprogramms Eanatum in seinem Amt und behauptet die Vormachtstellung von Lagaš.

Das in dauerhaften Stein geschlagene Bildprogramm und die in Schrift festgehaltene Sprache verankern auch die historische und göttliche Legitimation sowie den Ausgang des Konflikts zwischen den beiden Stadtstaaten im kulturellen Gedächtnis beider Opponenten und erschaffen damit ein Referenzwerk, das metaphysisch auch nach dem Tod des Eanatum fortbestehen sollte.

Nur durch die Zerstörung der Stele konnte die machtvolle Kommunikation zwischen den Systemen Lagaš und Umma unterbrochen und der dadurch bis dahin bestandene „Vertrag“ buchstäblich zerbrochen werden.⁶³

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⁶² May 2012, 4.

⁶³ Zum ‚Brechen‘ eines Vertrages vgl. Ebd. 4 Anm. 12.

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Christina Tsouparopoulou

Deconstructing Textuality, Reconstructing Materiality

This paper addresses the modern dominance of a textualist approach to the inscribed material culture of Mesopotamia, which perceives all things written as highly valuable and the very act of writing as sacred, fetishizing in this process the product of writing, the text. Two case studies with a focus on the material dimension of inscribed artefacts will be briefly examined aiming at proposing an alternative to and deconstructing this textualist view: two categories of objects bearing so-called ‘royal inscriptions’—inscriptions written/dictated/sponsored by royalty, that is 1) inscribed and uninscribed foundation deposits, i.e. objects deposited and deliberately hidden in the foundations of temples, and 2) clay bricks used in the construction of royal and sacred architecture, carrying royal inscriptions and ‘defiled’ by dogs. With a short comparative example taken from the Medieval era, this paper will discuss how the carrier of text is not a monolithic entity but a social agent, marked with non-textual imprints that introduce notions of value and meaning, arising from its materiality. I am attempting to deconstruct the text:artefact divide by looking at the value the ancients themselves could have ascribed to written objects and ask: if they did not ‘venerate’ text then, why should we ‘venerate’ it now?

Indeed there are two different methods one can assess the material dimensions and materiality of inscribed artefacts. Archaeologists working with and especially excavating inscribed specimens have long advocated for the proper documentation of inscribed artefacts in a similar vein to all other archaeological artefacts: contextualized.¹ This is definitely a first step in understanding the nuances of written artefacts as lived social objects; and this is indeed the first step in applying a holistic and integrated approach to the material culture of the Ancient Near East and to understanding

This article emerged from the Heidelberg Collaborative Research Center 933 “Material Text Cultures. Materiality and Presence of Writing in Non-Typographic Societies”. The CRC 933 is financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG). This article went through a radical ‘post-modernist’ peer-review. An earlier version was uploaded on academia.edu and tens of colleagues commented on it through an academia.edu session. I would first like to thank Augusta McMahon for her comments on an earlier than the one uploaded on academia.edu draft. Moreover, I would like to thank G. Selz, G. Zólyomi, H. Vogel, D. Stein, B. Schneider, G. Benati, S. Gordin, J. Andersson, R. Hinckley, L. Pearce, E. Olijdam, J. Taylor, D. Katz, Th. E. Balke, A. Payne, A. Joffe, F. del Bravo, K. Duistermaat, P. M. Tommasino, C. Sulzbach, A. di Ludovico, A. Garcia-Ventura, who all shared their opinion, comments, objections on the text. Even though I have not followed all comments, I greatly acknowledge here the help I received from so numerous colleagues to enhance my arguments and ameliorate the content. All errors and misconstructions of course remain mine.

1 See especially Zettler 1996 and Gibson 1972.

the past. In this paper I am suggesting another approach, perhaps a second step, to understanding the materiality of inscribed artefacts. I should emphasize that in doing so I do not believe we have successfully practiced this holistic approach advocated up to now into the past materials. But nowadays excavations in the Ancient Near East are limited and there are plenty of objects awaiting their study in museums around the world, excavated in the past, which this approach I am proposing here would help us to better evaluate them in their totality.

A different approach, closely related to the one I am proposing here is so-called ‘diplomats’, which entails the meticulous study of the minutiae of inscribed objects. Diplomats offers perspectives into the ‘materials-profiling’ of texts and inscribed objects in general.² What I am trying to do here however is to offer perspectives into the ‘materialitäts-profiling’ of texts,³ i.e. related to their use, social life and agency.

I start with discussing notions about the sanctity and value of Mesopotamian text from our own perspective, presenting a few examples, which show its veneration from modern people, scholars and ‘commoners’. The aim is to desacralize text. It probably seems unorthodox to suggest that text is sacred and one can desacralize it. According to the Oxford Dictionary ‘desacralize’ means to ‘remove the religious or sacred status or significance from’, and in this case I aim to remove the sacred significance of text-carriers. Even though almost never openly proclaimed, scholars still treat text as being sacred, diminishing the value of its material support. The perception of text as sacred is everywhere in our works, seemingly a modern understanding when parsing written records, be it a clay tablet, a statue, a plaque. We believe that the inscription made the object and not the other way round, sacralising in this process the text of the inscription. But even if we do not openly venerate it, we certainly give to the inscription incontestable value. Following Michalowski, who stated: “It is one thing to state banalities about ‘the other’, or about the inapplicability of western concepts to non-western modes of thought; it is something quite different actually to step outside one’s frame of reference and attempt a proper analysis”,⁴ my aim here is to step outside our frame of reference and understand what text meant for the objects’ users.

Only by understanding that inscribed objects are part of the same material culture as uninscribed objects, would we be in a position to fully comprehend the past. This paper attempts thus to take out the supernatural aura carried by media with writing and bring back into the focus their material substance, their materiality and agency.

² Charpin 2010; Postgate 2014.

³ Focken et al. 2015.

⁴ Michalowski 1999, 72.

1 Value of Text-bearing Objects

The two ‘objects’ discussed below are quite different from each other in terms of material, function, use and social lives. The bricks were made of clay, a mundane and easily acquired material in Mesopotamia, and were structurally essential besides having commemorative and communicative function. The foundation deposits are of more ‘exotic’ materials, stone and copper, both of which required a network of trade to function for the acquisition of their materials and a greater degree of specialization for their crafting. They had social lives, commemorative and symbolic use. Each one of these objects seems to have had a different kind of value: the bricks had an economic and when inscribed a communicative value; the foundation deposits an economic, communicative and symbolic one.

Value can have many different connotations and meanings. An object can have an economic value in the likes of Marx’s theory, or a symbolic value. But the communicative value of the text itself should not be overestimated. Thus, in texts and their carriers it is thought and rightly so that meaning is ‘prescribed in advance of social action’, and that ‘an inscribed object announces itself’, and makes its message apparent on its own right. Thus, inscribed objects are ‘by definition marked out as socially powerful, as valuables’, apart from them being the prime information-givers.⁵

It is also interesting to look at the value ascribed to an object from a conservator’s point of view. Elizabeth Pye discussed the inherent value of an object and its assigned value when it bears writing. She distinguishes three levels at which one can measure the relation between text and material: 1) the object is only functional as long as it provides information through its writing, for example a newspaper; 2) the material of the object is equally important, for example prize cups where both the material and the dedicatory inscription are important; and 3) objects on which writing does not affect their function, but is secondary and adds information on quality or source, for example the potters’ marks or the shelf marks on books. However, she adds that “in practice, because of its evidential value, the presence (or assumed presence), of any form of writing will almost always take priority over other factors during preliminary investigation, and when making conservation decisions”.⁶ Thus, it is evident that the moment writing is suspected, the object that bears text, irrespective of the function of the latter, is assigned a different value and thus treated differently.

This perception of an inscribed object’s value has also prevailed in the scholarly lore of Assyriologists, historians and archaeologists. This is especially true for research in third millennium BC Mesopotamia, broadly within the realm of historical archaeologies that privilege texts over artefacts and eventually making the divide text:artefact more prominent. Scholars working on third millennium (and collectors

⁵ Marshall 2008, 64.

⁶ Pye 2013, 321–322.

alike) seem to value an inscribed object higher than its uninscribed counterpart and a clean sanitized text higher than a 'spoilt' one. Therefore, the questions that I will try to answer in this paper are: does a similar uninscribed object have less value? By similar I mean objects that show the same degree of craftsmanship, made of the same material, and used for evidently the same purpose, with specimens existing both inscribed and uninscribed. Does an inscribed artefact that has been 'marred' under random circumstances contemporary with its use, lose its meaning and value? Or should we try to find a deeper meaning in its 'destruction', a meaning that is appreciable to modern symbolic orders?

2 Sanctity of Text

That text and writing are sacred is not a new idea; already in 1726 Daniel Defoe introduced his beliefs on the origins of writing as being ascribed to the gods. According to him, God composed the first text in the history of humanity once he wrote the Ten Commandments on the two stone tablets of Mount Sinai.⁷ Of course his theory is not supported anymore; there seems nonetheless to be an inherent need to associate writing and text with the supernatural.

Moving to Mesopotamia, Laurie Pearce⁸ emphasized the sacred character of text, and the inherent sanctity of the process of writing. Following Smith⁹ who writing on the Greek Magical Papyri equated the process of writing with the enactment of a ritual, Pearce goes on to suggest that: "[...] The act of writing is understood to contain sacred meaning in and of itself and that the integration of the mundane and the supernatural is manifest through the production of text." Her argument is based on two cases: first that in some colophons to literary and scientific texts, scribes used statements of purpose employing vocabulary from votive inscriptions, such as "for his long life, well being and hearing of his prayers". Her second example comes from Seleucid legal and scientific texts from Uruk and Babylon, which have the phrase "According to the command of Anu and Antu, may [this endeavor] be successful", added. This phrase with no connection to the content of the tablet, according to Pearce expressed the hope of the scribe that his writing would please the gods.

While it is certainly true that first millennium scholars equated writing and signs to the heaven and the stars, and spoke of heavenly writing,¹⁰ in both examples used by Pearce I argue that these phrases, in the colophons or as superscript, expressed the

⁷ Defoe 1726.

⁸ Pearce 2004.

⁹ Smith 1995.

¹⁰ For heavenly writing (*šīṭir šamê*) see Rochberg 2004. For its origins into the third millennium, see now Selz 2014.

scribe's hopes and a great deal of individuality in rendering the text. These examples do not have the depth of the contributions of other first millennium scholars who compared the act of writing with creation and the beginning.

Indeed, writing in Mesopotamia was thought to have been gifted by gods to man.¹¹ Writing was also in some ways deliberately esoteric and restricted.¹² But would that infer that the objects on which signs were inscribed were themselves sacred? Scribes never wrote that texts were inherently sacred; the gods could have protected their texts and writing, but these texts were not actually venerated. However, the notion of the inherent sanctity of text or of the process of writing is omnipresent in most modern scholarly works but never explicitly stated.

3 Modern Veneration of Text

Starting from Leo Oppenheim, who wrote:

[...] The texts on clay tablets are far more valuable, far more relevant, than the monuments that have been discovered, although the latter, especially the famous reliefs on the walls of Assyrian palaces and the countless products of glyptic art, offer welcome illustration to the wealth of factual information contained on clay tablets, stelae, and votive offerings [...]¹³

the idea of the importance of text over and above all other material manifestations, is still held. David Wengrow, in an article on materiality and power, used as an example an anecdote from Woolley's diary on the awe that filled him while unearthing a brick with a royal message, just because of the text on the object. Wengrow went on to link text with the power legitimization of a ruler for its contemporary and future audience. In the same article, using as a case study the foundation inscriptions of the Mesopotamian rulers he considered the striking role inscriptions held in this discourse and emphasized that they should not be overlooked. He argued for the interplay between writing, material and social agency, exemplifying the act per se of writing. According

¹¹ Nisaba for example was a goddess of agriculture and writing, protector of scribes who was succeeded in the first millennium by Nabu. The fact that a goddess of agriculture is also related to writing could possibly signify the close relationship of administration with the beginnings of writing. For the view that writing emerged within administrative settings and was not related to the supernatural, see among others Nissen/Damerow/Englund 1993. I would like to thank Helga Vogel for suggesting the link of administration to the creation of writing as a different approach on the written within the scholarly community.

¹² For more on secret knowledge, see Beaulieu 1992 and Lenzi 2008.

¹³ Oppenheim 1964, 10.

to him an inscribed object exerts a unique and intense relation with the agent and thus it is ascribed value from its function as an inscribed object.¹⁴

Laurie Pearce in an article on materiality and texts attempted to show that writing played an important part in the legitimization of power especially towards the divine realm.¹⁵ She suggested that even the placing of an inscribed tablet within the foundation deposits with the inscribed part facing up consolidates the value of texts for a direct reading of its content by a deity. She advocates that together with the inherent prestige value of the deposited materials, the concerted effort to display the inscriptions even in this inaccessible place emphasizes the value of the text itself in the foundation deposits. However, this contradicts with instances of inscribed bricks and foundation tablets found at Adab with the inscribed side placed facing down.¹⁶ For example, Ur III bricks at Adab with the inscribed part placed downwards have been found. In the ED foundation deposit of Einigmipae at Adab, the stone tablet was placed inscription facing up but the copper alloy tablet's inscribed part was facing down.¹⁷ Pearce went further explaining the absence of text on some foundation tablets: 'anepigraphic tablets symbolically conveyed a written message'. But then why ever inscribe a text on them = if a written message could be symbolically conveyed?

I do not wish to distance myself from the excitement one gets when unearthing an inscribed object. It is indeed true that there is an inherent satisfaction when a text-bearing object is brought to light. First it adds extra information about the function of the object, and could possibly be of historical value. For those who can read it, it will definitely add a significant piece to the puzzle. But this satisfaction, academic curiosity and natural excitement have all influenced the perception of the modern 'locals' when standing next to an inscribed object. The following passage shows a somewhat biased view on the beliefs locals kept about inscribed objects in the 1900s when illiteracy was high in the region:

Near the south-east edge of the platform was an ancient doorway to some chamber, but all that remained of it were two blocks of pink stone, upon which a white-stone door-socket rested. In a hollow in the socket the wooden post revolved. The socket was carefully formed and polished, but if it bore an inscription it had been worn away. One day I found a workman industriously chipping the stone away, and when I asked him why he was doing it, he replied that he was seeking for money. It is the general belief among the Arabs that every inscribed or engraved stone conceals the wealth of the ancients [...]¹⁸

¹⁴ Wengrow 2005.

¹⁵ Pearce 2010.

¹⁶ I would like to thank Jakob Andersson for bringing these cases to my attention.

¹⁷ Wilson 2012, 79 and 93.

¹⁸ Banks 1912, 247. This passage possibly shows a western view, entwined with colonialist underpinnings of Banks.

Similarly—or not—the inscribed door socket of Manishtushu was secondarily used by local women. Al-Rawi and Black wrote:

[...] barren women were in the habit of anointing the stone in the hope of conceiving (doubtless unaware of its ancient connection with a goddess associated with childbirth).¹⁹

Whether Manishtusu door-socket's secondary use was related to the presence of an inscription on the object, to its antiquity or some other properties is difficult to say. These two cases above however show that large stone objects were highly regarded in the region during the recent past. Whether this was due to the writing they bore remains a point for discussion. I would however lean towards the view that writing did add a certain aura to the objects in question.

My point in this discussion is to argue that using the available material, we could deconstruct the notion that the inscription only gave more value to an object, or that an inscribed object was considered sacred or valuable in itself. For this I move on to the two case-studies.

3.1 Inscribed and Uninscribed Foundation Deposits

Ritually burying foundation deposits during the construction and/or renovation of a new temple is well attested in Mesopotamia. Standardized accumulations of objects were usually placed beneath the foundations of buildings, at seemingly structurally significant points, such as below entrances, corners, and wall intersections. In the Ur III period, in monumental buildings, they were always deposited in a receptacle, more commonly in a brick box (fig. 1).

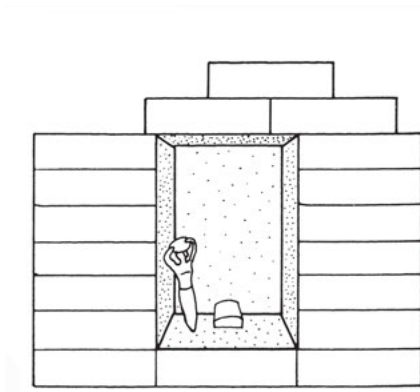


Fig. 1: Drawing of an Ur III foundation box (taken from Ellis 1968).

¹⁹ Al-Rawi/Black 1993, 147.

Ur III foundation deposits have been found at Ur, Nippur, Uruk, Girsu and Susa. They consisted of a copper canephore figure and a plano-convex brick made of stone (usually steatite or limestone); sometimes other objects were also present, such as beads and stone chips (fig. 2a). Wooden fragments have also been found, and in some cases they seemed to be figurines similar to the copper ones. The copper figurine was wrapped in cloth and measured approximately 30 cm in height (fig. 2b).²⁰ The stone tablets, which were shaped like plano-convex bricks, measured around 10x5 cm. The sets, that is the figurine and the tablet, were usually inscribed with a building inscription, recording the name of the king and the building project in a formulaic manner, but they could also be uninscribed.²¹

There has not been a satisfactory answer as to why some sets in these foundation deposits were uninscribed. To briefly summarize, at Ur foundation boxes were found in three loci: an empty box at the Temple of Nanna, three boxes at the Ehursag all with uninscribed figurines and stone tablets, and five deposits of Shulgi at the Temple of Nimin-tabba, with only one of the sets on the uppermost corner uninscribed.²² Woolley changed his mind twice about why the foundation deposits of the Ehursag were uninscribed, ranging from being a building dedicated to many deities to being a building of public character and not a temple. Ellis likewise did not give a definitive answer. The fact that all seven foundation boxes and deposits from the Inana temple at Nippur were also uninscribed did not aid in understanding the practice of not inscribing them.²³

Before discussing the importance or not of text, I will first discuss possible differences seen in the rendering and manufacture of inscribed and uninscribed foundation deposits. My aim is to see whether there was any qualitative difference between the two. I start with the uninscribed foundation stone tablets. I would like to stress here that I have been unable to trace the uninscribed foundation tablets from Ur. Even though most objects in Woolley's publications are listed in a concordance of the excavation number with the museum number they were sent to, for these uninscribed tablets only one such record exists. Moreover, even though there is a description and photograph of one of the uninscribed foundation figurines from the Ehursag, no photograph is available for the uninscribed tablets. Should we insert here a caveat for bias towards uninscribed tablets? In the main text of the publication,²⁴ Woolley gives the excavation number of one of the sets of uninscribed foundation deposits, but not for the other,²⁵ while in the catalogue only the inscribed foundation tablet from the

²⁰ See the discussion of Garcia-Ventura (2008; 2012) on clothed foundation figurines.

²¹ Ellis 1968.

²² For the foundation deposits at Ur see Woolley 1926, 1939 and 1974 as well as Zettler 1986 and Ellis 1968, 63–64.

²³ For the foundation deposits at Nippur see Haines 1956, Haines 1958 and Zettler 1992.

²⁴ Woolley 1974.

²⁵ "In the south corner [...] Inside it there stood a copper foundation-figure of the king carrying a

Nimin-tabba temple is recorded completely, with excavation number, reference to similar foundation deposits and its museum number.²⁶



Fig. 2: a. Foundation figurine and stone tablet from Nippur © Chicago, The Oriental Institute Museum; b. on the right foundation figurine covered with textile from Nippur (taken from Rashid 1983, Taf. C 136).



Fig. 3: a-b. Two sides of an uninscribed foundation stone tablet from the temple of Inana at Nippur, housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ht. 2.5 x Le. 9.7 x Wi. 6 cm © New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; c. Uninscribed foundation stone tablet from the temple of Inana at Nippur, housed in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto; Ht. 3.9 x Le. 9 x Wi. 6.5 cm © Toronto, The Royal Ontario Museum.

basket (U. 1000, pl. 47a) which had been wrapped in linen, and at its feet was a steatite tablet (U. 1001); neither was inscribed. A similar box with similar (uninscribed) figure and tablet was found in the mud-brick foundations of the east corner.” Woolley 1974, 36.

26 “*U.6157 Tablet, black steatite, inscribed with the dedication by Dungi of the Dim-tab-ba temple. UET I, No. 59. Found in situ in a foundation-box below the wall of the temple. See U.6300, 6302, 6304. p. 40, Pl. 48a. (L.BM.118560)”. Woolley 1974, catalogue.

The situation is not comparable with the Nippur excavations: photographs of anepigraphic foundation tablets from Nippur are indeed available.²⁷ Both anepigraphic tablets come from the Inana temple at Nippur. The one in figures 3a and 3b is now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the records of the Museum it says that this is a model of a brick made from bituminous limestone. The one shown in figure 3c is housed in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and the records of the museum mention it as “Dedicatory stone from foundation deposit of the temple of Inanna (uninscribed)”.

These two uninscribed foundation tablets seem to have been equally well executed as their inscribed counterparts. Both inscribed and uninscribed tablets resemble the plano-convex bricks used in earlier periods in the construction of buildings, by having a depression on their convex side, in imitation of the so-called thumb impression. We can compare here the uninscribed ones to an inscribed limestone one housed at the Morgan Library, which is inscribed with a dedication of Ur-Namma, for when he built the temple of Enlil (fig. 4a). Both tablets bear the same depression on their reverse uninscribed side, both seem to have been polished at their ends and both are quite symmetrical.



Fig. 4: Inscribed foundation tablets. a. From Ur Le. 12.4 x Wi. 8.3 cm (MLC 2629) © New York, The Morgan Library & Museum; b. From the temple of Nimin-taba at Ur (B16217) © University of Pennsylvania Museum; c. From the temple of Nimin-taba at Ur (BM 118560) © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Their differences are only slight: first, the inscribed ones had also their surface polished after they were inscribed, making them appear gleaming and lustrous. This could also be attributed post-excavation; it is relatively difficult to ascertain the sequence.²⁸ Second, they are differentiated in size. The inscribed ones are quite longer

²⁷ I would like to thank Dr. Clemens Reichel for providing me with photographs of the uninscribed foundation tablet from the temple of Inana at Nippur, housed now in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

²⁸ I would like to thank Jonathan Taylor for pointing this out. Indeed, from the British Museum's

than the uninscribed ones (fig. 3). Nonetheless, it should be mentioned here that all tablets from Susa as well as some stray—and not properly excavated tablets—from Uruk seem to have been quite small, measuring roughly 7x4 cm with a height of 1 cm.

The stones used were equally the same. Limestone and steatite prevailed for both inscribed and uninscribed tablets. It seems that the stones were selected with the same eye to light and dark contrasts as in the inscribed specimens. Thus, we can say that both inscribed and uninscribed stone tablets were carefully and equally executed irrespective of whether they had text incised on their surfaces.



Fig. 5: Foundation figurines, inscribed and uninscribed. a. From the Ehursag at Ur (taken from Woolley 1974, pl. 47a); b. From the Inana temple at Nippur © New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; c. From the Ekur at Nippur © Chicago, The Oriental Institute Museum; d. from the Nimin-taba temple at Ur (taken from Woolley 1974, pl. 47c).

On the other hand, because of the artistic nature and value of the foundation figurines²⁹ it has been easier to find information and photographs of uninscribed ones. As is evident from the photographs in figure 5, the uninscribed figurines are similarly crafted when compared to the inscribed ones and all are of equal quality. The best example probably comes from Nippur where at the Ekur the figurines were inscribed while at the Inana temple they were not. The rendering of both sets is unambiguously the best seen so far from an Ur III foundation deposit (taking into consideration

documentation, we can see that some of these foundation tablets (as well as door sockets) were treated after acquisition by the museum: sometimes the signs were filled in with this white substance. It is thus not difficult to see a similar treatment, such as polishing, to have taken place at the museum.

²⁹ On the shining properties of metal, and the aesthetic value of radiance, see Winter 1994.

the fineness of casting, the naturalism of the pose and their proportions) irrespective of whether they were inscribed or not. Moreover, and more importantly, the metal alloy analysis of these figurines shows that in the Ur III period, starting from Gudea onwards, all figurines, irrespective of whether they were inscribed or not were pure copper, about 99% of copper.³⁰ So in all respects inscribed and uninscribed foundation figurines were equally executed.

3.2 Bricks

And now I would like to bring to our attention our thoughts over the importance of text. What do we think of when we see an inscribed brick? Are we awestruck like Woolley was in the 1920s? Why did Woolley stand short when he encountered an inscribed brick? Was it really the inscription that left him lost for words; was it the notion of the inscription or the content of the inscription? Would he have experienced similar sentiments had he found an uninscribed set of objects? Would a person, of the likes of the workers of Nabonidus, when they conducted archaeologically oriented digs to find the foundations of temples of former grandeur, stand still when they would encounter an inscribed object? Or would they experience the same awe had they found a *tabula rasa* with the shape of a plano-convex brick? Of course we get excited that an inscribed brick might help us in the identification of the structure we are excavating. But do we categorize it as a royal and building inscription, as an object that bears a royal inscription only in our texts or also in our structuring visualization of Mesopotamian life? Are we royalists or populists? And when we see a brick carrying a royal message on which a dog has randomly stepped while the brick was drying (fig. 8) what do we think? Was the inscription so meaningful and powerful to the past viewer as it was to Woolley?

Bricks have a long history of manufacture in Mesopotamia. Made of clay, they were fired, air-dried, decorated, glazed, stamped with an inscription or incised. They were integral to the construction of buildings, and seem to have been of standardized sizes. The fact that bricks were used in abstract mathematical calculations³¹ supports the notion that they must have been a widely known unit within Mesopotamian thinking, comparable to nowadays kilo.

³⁰ Hauptmann/Pernicka 2004; Muscarella 1988.

³¹ Robson 1999.



Fig. 6: The images here show the production of bricks in molds by Syrian laborers preparing to build a 1982 addition to the excavation house of the German mission to Tell Bi'a near Raqqa (courtesy K. Englund).

Bricks used in the construction of temples all over Mesopotamia and Iran seem to have random imprints left by domestic and wild animals roaming around the areas these bricks were left out to dry (figs. 7–8). Examples can be found at Chogha Zanbil, where there are even bricks with human footprints (fig. 7b), said by some archaeologists to belong to children and in the Ziggurat of Chogha Zanbil bricks occur with animal paw prints. In Assur, at the entrance to a house dated to the seventh century there is a brick on the floor with an imprint of an animal (fig. 7c). From Ur as well comes a brick with a footprint possibly of a child (fig. 7a).



Fig. 7: Bricks with human and animal footprints. a. From Ur (UM 84-26-123); b. From Chogha Zanbil (courtesy U. B rger); c. From Assur (courtesy P. Miglus).

But how common would such impressions have been on bricks thought today to symbolize the materialization of a ruler's power: on inscribed bricks bearing a so-called royal inscription? Inscribed bricks are considered to bear a royal/monumental inscription, just because they carry on them a text prescribed by the ruler/king and mentioning him and usually the god/goddess to whom the temple/building was dedicated. They are included in the royal inscriptions and carry an air of importance just because they are considered the bearers of a royal message. But to the eyes of the

laborers, the people and whole communities who manufactured them, what did they symbolize? Were they perceived as manifestations of power, or were they just thought of as some more building materials? Indeed such royal/building inscriptions were equally ‘defiled’ by dogs. Two such examples come from Ur bearing an inscription of Ur-Nammu for when he built the house of Nanna,³² and along a dog’s paw prints (fig. 8), possibly of middle size, weighing around 15–20 kg.³³



Fig. 8: Bricks with royal inscriptions and paw prints from Ur. a. BM 137495; b. BM 90014
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

The answer that one would intuitively give to the question raised above is that all people participating in the construction of a temple stood in awe in front of the grandeur of the work of the ruler. And this was supposed to be the purpose of such enormous constructions when 7.000.000 bricks would be needed to build one ziggurat.³⁴ To understand the grandiosity of a ziggurat’s construction, it would be important to stress Campbell’s calculations for the ziggurat at Babylon: the Ziggurat had 36.000.000 bricks (1/10 of which fired); 7200 working days would have been required for the production of the fired bricks, and 21.600 for the rest. Thus, Campbell calculated that only for the bricks (production and laying) 1.500 workers would have been needed.³⁵ This enormous construction and production, both in labor and materials, should have appeased the ruler and enhanced his power. Even if in the building

³² Frayne, *RIME* 3/2.1.1.2, ex. 18, and *RIME* 3/2.1.1.33.4.

³³ Englund 2014, Bricks 9 (2014-02-20) from cdl tablet.

³⁴ David Oates calculated that only for the outer wall of the so-called ‘Palace of Naram-Sin’ at Tell Brak, 810,000 bricks would have been required for its construction, while the straw for its mortar and bricks would equal more than 13sq m of cultivation (Oates 1990, 390). Heimpel 2009 calculated that in the Ur III period, brick production equaled about 240 bricks per worker per day.

³⁵ Campbell 2003, 33.

inscriptions those people (the laborers) were just more anonymous agents, there is a prevailing image of those anonymous agents as standing amazed in front of the power of the ruler and the gods. But also the fact that some of those objects were inscribed should have given them a different prestige.

However in reality it seems that those people most probably did not spend too much time considering such implications, as can also be seen in the Shulgi's mausoleum's area at Ur, where the builders stacked bricks which were left over from the building of the mausoleum and instead of being removed, they were left there against the face of an old wall, some 400 bricks in total, eventually buried beneath accumulated rubbish (fig. 9). How the area of a royal building could be so disfigured by piles of discarded building materials, if the builders were so much awed by its grandeur? And if a dog stepped on a brick these builders had just stamped with the royal message, they would not be bothered twice. They would still use it.



Fig. 9: Piles of bricks left over from the building of Shulgi's mausoleum (taken from Woolley 1974, pl. 2b).

Moving forward to the 15th century, two scribes, far apart from each other, found their manuscripts marred by cats. One of them in 1445 found his neatly written manuscript imprinted by a cat's paws that not only stepped on it but also first passed through the ink, thus leaving its unwanted marks for posterity (fig. 10a).

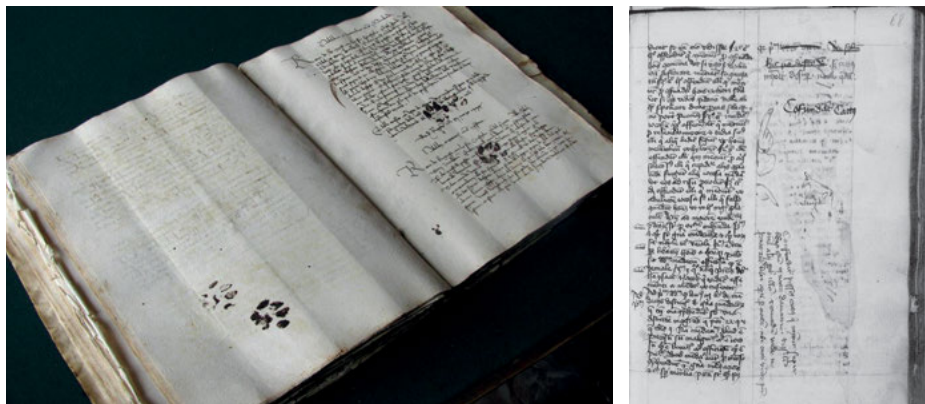


Fig. 10: a. Cat paws in a fifteenth-century manuscript (photo taken at the Dubrovnik archives by @Emir Filipovic);³⁶ b. *Confundatur pessimus catus* © Cologne, Historisches Archiv, G. B. quarto, 249, fol. 68r.

Another scribe in the Dutch city of Deventer must have been even more annoyed finding his manuscript to have had feline urine stains (fig. 10b). This one was more imaginative, and leaving the rest of the page empty, drew a picture of a cat and cursed it:

Hic non defectus est, sed catus minxit desuper nocte quadam. Confundatur pessimus catus qui minxit super librum istum in nocte Daventrie, et consimiliter omnes alii propter illum. Et cavendum valde ne permittantur libri aperti per noctem ubi cattie venire possunt.

[Here is nothing missing, but a cat urinated on this during a certain night. Cursed be the pesty cat that urinated over this book during the night in Deventer and because of it many others [other cats] too. And beware well not to leave open books at night where cats can come.]³⁷

3.3 Discussion

In this paper I have used two different case studies from the material text culture of Mesopotamia to discuss the importance of text and how the divide of artefact:text should be deconstructed.

In both inscribable objects from the foundation deposits, the stone tablet/brick-model and the copper figurine, the inscribing process represents only the final stage

³⁶ Taken from <http://medievalfragments.wordpress.com/2013/02/22/paws-peeand-mice-cats-among-medieval-manuscripts/> (last accessed: 22.06.2016).

³⁷ Porck 2013.

in their manufacture. The inscription alone does not add much more to the value of the object since the materials used required a preliminary involvement of labor or are the result of trade, two characteristics that gave them a basic economic value. The intrinsic value of both objects was high enough. Writing did not add to the intrinsic economic value of an item, but it added significance in terms of context and could thus have been left out. This exclusion did not in any way diminish the value and meaning of the foundation deposit. Value was most importantly acquired from the material and the labor required having these objects made.³⁸ What I am discussing here is the possibility to take into consideration the intrinsic value of the objects in question. Taking the pluralistic view of Moore³⁹ when discussing intrinsic value, I will take it that the objects discussed above can be considered entities, which have value 'as such', 'in themselves'. Thus, looking at the materiality of text-carriers it seems possible to suggest that neither the text nor the text-supports (material) were venerated. Both were valued and sometimes the material itself carried much intrinsic value but not sanctity.

My second example, the bricks stamped with the royal message and dogs' paws, show that text did not need be detached from daily life, and that the audience of the text would not be offended if a dog roaming around stepped on one of the bricks carrying a royal message. The sacred character of both a building and an object was not contaminated by everyday life.

Using these two examples, I show that both the degree to which value is made intrinsic to an object, and the way it is performatively enacted in lived social action are critical to the kind of agency it will exercise. Value was not created only through inscription, though it was more prominently stated, but other features as well gave to the artefact its social life and agency.

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³⁸ Irene Winter's work on the redefinition of value in Mesopotamian objects' chaîne-opératoire is indispensable for anyone working with artefacts and their 'value', the agency of the material and the agency of the object (Winter 1994, 1995, 2003, 2007).

³⁹ Moore 1903.

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Susan Pollock

From Clay to Stone: Material Practices and Writing in Third Millennium Mesopotamia

1 Introduction

Materiality has become a widely used term in anglophone archaeology and anthropology in the last decade or two, joined by “new materialism”, the “material turn”, and “symmetrical archaeology”. These various concepts and their underpinnings have been adopted and adapted from other disciplines, based in large measure on the premise that scholarship has given insufficient attention to the material basis of social life. As observed by one practitioner of the “material turn”, the “materiality of social life has been marginalized—even stigmatized—in scientific and philosophical discourses during the 20th century”.¹

When confronted with a relatively new term or concept, it is useful to begin by reflecting on why it is of interest in general as well as why it is of interest now. To be flippant, one might say that for archaeologists, materiality offers a sophisticated-sounding justification for a long-standing preoccupation with material objects that is more or less given by the nature of the field. For assyriologists and related scholars of ancient texts, the adoption of a materiality approach represents an oft belated recognition that the written record consists of writing *on* something and *by* someone, rather than being composed of disembodied ideas.²

It is probably no accident that the material turn comes at a time of unprecedented consumerism in many, albeit not all, corners of the globe, when large numbers of people—especially those of us who write and talk about notions like materiality—are almost completely detached from material production. Materiality studies have followed this sign of the times and have tended to situate themselves squarely in the realm of consumption.

2 What is Materiality?

At its most fundamental the term materiality has been used in anglophone archaeological and cultural anthropological discussions to spotlight the role of material things (objects) in constituting social life and social beings (persons). Crucially, this

¹ Olsen 2003, 87.

² See in this regard Hilgert 2010; Taylor 2011.

is meant to showcase more than simply the fact that things are made of materials: materiality is not synonymous with material or matter.

A concern with materiality in archaeology was initially popularized by the work of Daniel Miller and his students and colleagues.³ For Miller a fundamental element in the concept of materiality is the process of objectification. He draws on Hegel's notion that there is "no fundamental separation between humanity and materiality".⁴ Objectification involves separation and the creation of form that results from it—whether material or intangible—that in turn provides a mirror in which we see and also constitute ourselves. Miller writes:

We cannot know who we are, or become what we are, except by looking in a material mirror, which is the historical world created by those who lived before us. This world confronts us as material culture and continues to evolve through us.⁵

Objectification must be understood as always in process, that which gives form and produces what *appear to be* autonomous objects and subjects. For Miller, both subjects and objects are merely appearances emerging out of the process of objectification.⁶ Yet as an anthropologist rather than a philosopher, he contends that we must engage with the world in a way that makes sense to people, that is, *as if* subjects and objects are distinct categories.

Much of Miller's work has been firmly located in studies of consumption in contemporary societies.⁷ This emphasis has been seen by some scholars as a needed counterpart to longstanding concerns with production and exchange, especially in archaeology, but it has not gone without critique by others who contend that it has become too focused on shopping and the desire for things.⁸

Certainly a recognition of consumption as an important element of human activity and meaning construction has helped to rectify an over-focus on production. However, a swing of the pendulum to the opposite extreme is equally troubling. Although western societies tend to prioritize end products—"consumables" as finished products—in other social contexts a far greater emphasis is placed on working with materials and fashioning of things, rather than primarily on using them, as the anthropologist Timothy Ingold has emphasized. For Ingold, a "thing" is characterized

³ See especially Miller 2005a.

⁴ Miller 2005b, 8.

⁵ Miller 2005b, 8.

⁶ These notions are in some respects clearer in German, where the word for object, *Gegenstand*, clearly denotes the non-identity of that which is objectified in relation to a subject (*was dagegen steht*).

⁷ For example, Miller 1987, 1998; Banerjee/Miller 2003.

⁸ Olsen 2003, 91–94; see also Carrier/Heyman 1997; Ingold 2007.

by being always in the making, in motion, in contrast to an “object” which he describes as a “*fait accompli*”.⁹

The heavy focus on consumption is particularly critical in the kinds of complex, hierarchically structured societies with strong divisions of labor that we are examining in third millennium Mesopotamia: societies where knowledges and relations to material objects are likely to have differed quite sharply between those who made things—producers—and those who used them—consumers—even if they remained closer and were characterized more by mutual knowledge than in today’s world. To take just one example, the knowledge and skills of a scribe who wrote a tablet and his/her interactions with the scribal product were surely quite different than those between a person who commissioned a text but could not read or write it and the objects bearing writing that that person possessed. In turn these distinctions have the potential to create differential relations of power and different kinds of persons.

A much discussed element of materiality studies that relates to the questioning of conventional subject-object boundaries has been the issue of agency and the question of whether things can be said to “have agency”. Alfred Gell, whose work has had a considerable influence in anglophone archaeology, argued that because material things have consequences for people and how people act, things can be said to have agency.¹⁰ However, in contrast to Gell’s notion of a “secondary agency” that characterizes non-humans, the growing interest in posthumanist approaches has taken such arguments in far more radical directions.¹¹

As one of the best known proponents of posthumanism, Bruno Latour has argued against privileging the social and the human at the expense of the non-human world, including both animate beings and inanimate things. He emphasizes the importance of both human and non-human actors, a call that has been echoed by archaeologists who promote a “symmetrical archaeology”.¹² Latour and others subscribing to a “symmetrical” view accuse the social sciences of an unjustified anthropocentrism and of having contributed to a “purification” of the world that tries to discount the existence of hybrids. Ultimately this approach involves a radical dissolution of the modernist boundaries between subject and object, between people and things, to be replaced by an acknowledgment of the distributedness of agentic capacities that are no longer understood as a specific characteristic of humans, but which rather characterizes so-called “actants”.¹³

⁹ Ingold 2007, 2010, 4. In contrast, I do not make a sharp distinction between these terms.

¹⁰ Gell 1998.

¹¹ Latour 1996, 1998.

¹² Olsen 2003; Shanks 2007; Webmoor 2007; Witmore 2007; Webmoor/Witmore 2008; Alberti et al. 2011.

¹³ Roßler 2008.

Most scholars who have adopted approaches that can be broadly grouped as the “material turn” have, like Miller in his understanding of objectification, placed an emphasis on process rather than static states. Ingold has argued that we need an ontology that gives primacy to the making of things rather than to finished products, to transformations and flows rather than to states of being,¹⁴ noting that it takes an effort to keep things in a constant state.¹⁵ Ingold, as well as proponents of the “new materialism”, have pointed to the productive capacities of materials.¹⁶ Things are said not to exist outside of the relations in which they are enmeshed, and in these relationships “all things [...] have the potential to materially impact all other things”.¹⁷

For at least some of its adherents, the material turn has significant political and ethical dimensions. These stem first and foremost from an acknowledgment of the destructiveness that has accompanied a modernist western ontology’s insistence on the boundedness of subjects and objects, with the corresponding assumption that the subject is the active element, the master, and the object the passive one. The negative impact of this stance is forcefully argued in terms of global climate change as well as the detrimental impacts these worldviews have had on the lives of non-Western people.¹⁸ On the positive side, archaeologists have pointed to the discipline’s capacities to intervene by examining the long term “in a period pervaded by very short-term thought” that “determin[es] our global futures”.¹⁹ The role of complex causation has also been highlighted, an implication of which is that the results of interactions—and hence of history—are unpredictable.²⁰

To briefly summarize, approaches that can be broadly collected under the rubric of the material turn offer crucial insights regarding the mutual interactions between people and things and especially the ways in which the material world shapes and constrains people. While some scholars have insisted on the recognition that through their interactions things and people constitute one another in a continual process of becoming,²¹ a posthumanist stance, following Latour, seeks to dissolve the distinction between subject and object altogether.

To me a posthumanist approach, with its emphasis on symmetry and actants, goes too far. Instead I place the process of subjectification at the center of interest. In many ways the mirror image of objectification, subjectification explores the ways in which interactions among people and between people and their material worlds constitute subjects (as well as objects). If we attribute a central role to subjectifica-

¹⁴ Ingold 2010.

¹⁵ Ingold 2010, 8–10; see also González-Ruibal 2008.

¹⁶ Coole/Frost 2010, 7–13.

¹⁷ Fowles in Alberti et al. 2011, 906; Witmore in Alberti et al. 2011, 898; Hodder 2012.

¹⁸ Fowles in Alberti et al. 2011; Coole/Frost 2010, 8; see also Burmeister 2012, 46–47.

¹⁹ Witmore 2007, 548; see also Robb/Pauketat 2013.

²⁰ Coole/Frost 2010, 14.

²¹ Ingold 2007; Pollock 2007, 2013; Pollock/Bernbeck 2010; Bernbeck 2008.

tion rather than objectification, we acknowledge the fundamental contribution of people (subjects) to shaping and modifying the material world and imbuing their creations with meaning—all of which, in turn, shape subjects. Being modest about being human, as posthumanists insist, may indeed be appropriate, as long as we acknowledge at the same time that we, along with our forebears, have played a major role in creating the very forms that subjectivize us. The claims of posthumanism leave us just one step away from dissolving the importance of people's ethical and political responsibility for their actions as well as effacing the political economic interests that underpin many of the realms in which posthumanism can be most clearly recognized, for example, biotechnology.²²

Among the important elements of an engagement with materiality, I single out three as especially central to my purposes in this paper. The first is the focus on things always being in process rather than static or complete. Second is the fundamental importance of the multiple interactions among people, the things they produce and the subjects that are thereby continually in the making. Finally, the things that people make and use not only enable but also constrain people's possible scope for acting.

3 Mesopotamia in the Early Dynastic Period

I turn now to some thoughts on the ways in which insights from the material turn can illuminate aspects of the early use of writing in Mesopotamia. Starting in the late fourth but most pronounced in the third millennium, Mesopotamia witnessed an unprecedented explosion of material objects produced, used, and discarded, made in a great variety of materials, forms, and sheer quantities. Involved in these processes of materialization and discard were new techniques and tools and the putting to use of existing ones in new and different ways.²³ Around the same time—in the late fourth millennium—writing appeared and over the course of the following centuries underwent a variety of profound modifications. I will examine three sets of changes related to the specific materiality of writing and its development from its origins through the first half of the third millennium BCE. These are (1) the extensions of writing to different media, (2) temporality and especially an orientation toward the future, and (3) mechanical reproduction. Central to my argument is that the material dimensions of those things that bore writing shaped their makers and users—subjects—in specific ways; in other words, as people made things, their actions as well as the products thereof in turn opened up as well as constrained possibilities (*Handlungsräume*) for the future.

²² Burmeister 2012, 48–49; Gottwald/Krätzer 2014.

²³ Moorey 1994; Bernbeck 2004.

4 The Medium

The earliest known writing, from the Late Uruk period, occurs solely on clay tablets. This choice of material was part of a millennia-long tradition in which clay was used as the material par excellence for memory storage tools, including tokens and sealings. Soon after its initial appearance on clay tablets, writing was extended to the so-called “city sealings”, referred to as such because they bear the names of Mesopotamian cities; these seal impressions, dating to the Jemdet Nasr and Early Dynastic I periods, are found on tablets as well as on doors and mobile containers.²⁴ No actual city seals have been found, although they must, of course, have existed. By Early Dynastic III times,²⁵ there was an explosion of writing on other media, including stone and shell cylinder seals; stone plaques, stelae and statues; stone, copper/bronze and silver vessels; and metal weapons. As the material basis of writing expanded, so, too, did the need to (learn to) produce cuneiform signs on other kinds of materials with very different properties.

What did this extension of media—different materials as well as different kinds of objects—imply in terms of the skills, knowledge, and social interactions among artisans and their consequences for the craftpersons themselves? Forming and manipulating clay involved a set of skills that had been long and widely practiced by the time writing first appeared, ranging from making mudbricks to fashioning pottery, figurines, and an array of other small objects. There was a substantial knowledge base surely shared by many people, including an intimate familiarity with the properties and possibilities of clay as a material. The use of clay tablets as a medium on which to write involved specific temporal considerations: the necessity to incise (for the earliest “proto-cuneiform”) or impress (for subsequent forms of writing) written signs into the moist clay before it dried to a point where this was no longer possible. Taylor and Cartwright suggest that tablet surfaces may have dried beyond usability in as little as an hour, unless they were covered with damp cloths to slow the drying process.²⁶ This temporal constraint meant that a scribe had a limited window of time in which to inscribe the tablet, even if it were prolonged to some extent by the use of cloth coverings. This does not in itself differ from other things made of clay, except insofar as writing was a more complex process that required more time to produce than the rolling or stamping of a seal. The scribe would also have needed to develop the bodily skills and a certain *Augenmaß*²⁷ that would have allowed him or her to

²⁴ Matthews 1993, 30–41.

²⁵ I do not wish to enter here into the complexities of chronological arguments about whether it is possible to distinguish an Early Dynastic II period.

²⁶ Taylor/Cartwright 2011, 311.

²⁷ “Visual judgment”.

space the signs appropriately, leaving enough room to accommodate the full complement in the space available.

What becomes particularly interesting is the extension of writing from clay to other materials, already probably underway within a century or two of the invention of writing but something that took on much greater dimensions sometime around the mid-third millennium BCE. As already mentioned, no examples of city seals are attested that correspond to the known city *sealings*. The absence of seals might indicate that they were made of a less durable material, as already suggested by Roger Matthews who has proposed wood as a likely material.²⁸ The rationale for suggesting wood is indirect, based on the fineness of the carving, rather than the identification of any traces of wood grain. If instead the seals were made of baked clay—a suggestion for which there is also no direct evidence—it would imply putting together material and form in a novel combination—clay was already in use as a medium for writing, but the form was quite different (tablets), whereas cylinder seals had been made and used for several centuries, but not to write.

Be that as it may, by the Early Dynastic III period, writing is found on stone, shell, and metal, on cylinder seals, plaques, vessels, stelae, and statues. These extensions to different materials in turn required different sets of skills. The use of stone, the most commonly attested class of inscribed materials apart from clay, would have entailed learning to chisel signs into a hard surface²⁹ rather than impressing them into a soft one. This, in turn, involved a substantially different set of motor skills and familiarity with material properties and tools.³⁰ In the case of seals, it would also have meant an ability to produce a mirror image of the signs that were to appear once rolled. Carving intaglio in stone had been practiced as long as seals had been in use—several millennia by the time writing began—but doing so in mirror image was likely not a widely practiced skill. Most if not all seal designs prior to the beginnings of inscriptions on seals would probably not have appeared “wrong”, even if the seal cutter had carved the design in the same way as s/he wished it to appear when stamped or rolled, i.e. not in mirror image. This would not work for inscriptions. That carving a mirror image of the desired product was sometimes unintentionally misconceived can be seen in the case of an early third millennium city sealing in which the signs are in reverse of their normal orientation and order.³¹

Did scribes learn to write in mirror image and in stone when inscriptions began to be used on seals? If so, they would also have had to learn to write on a highly curved object rather than on the typically “pillow-shaped” surface of a tablet. Or did seal cutters learn to write? Perhaps scribes provided drawings of inscriptions that were

²⁸ Matthews 1993, 18.

²⁹ How hard would, of course, depend on the type of stone.

³⁰ Leroi-Gourhan 1943.

³¹ Matthews 1993, 30.

then transferred by seal cutters to their overall designs in the reverse? If so, in what material were the drawings made? While these questions cannot be answered definitively, the occurrence of seals in the ED III period with carefully delineated panels for inscriptions that were never filled³² points to the incorporation of writing as a separate and later step in the production process. This could mean that seals were made in advance and stored until a commission was received, but it might just as well be an indication that the seal cutter and the producer of the inscription were not necessarily the same person and that the incorporation of an inscription could happen much later than the cutting of the image. It also means that the inclusion of an inscription was planned together with the overall design, even if in the end it was not always realized.

The incorporation of writing onto plaques, stelae, and sculptures did not require the ability to conceive of the written word as a mirror image, but the same familiarization with stone and the transference of writing to it were required. Inscriptions on stone plaques tend to be scattered throughout the scene, as if placed there as an afterthought,³³ quite unlike the carefully set apart panels on seals. The lengthy text on the Stele of the Vultures was added after the carving of the imagery, and while text and imagery deal with the same basic themes, they do not correspond in an exact way.³⁴ These distinctions suggest more than just a different aesthetic or compositional approach; rather, they tell us something about the degree to which written elements were part of the initial conception of an object along with the imagery.

Along with the extension of writing from clay to stone (and shell³⁵) came another set of changes related to the move from a “neutral” technology that involved impressing shapes onto a surface to a subtractive one. While mistakes on clay tablets were not necessarily easy to erase, it was possible to do so;³⁶ in the case of a mistaken carving on a cylinder seal, there was no way to hide it other than to cut further, changing both the surface and the size of the cylinder.

Regardless of who made the inscriptions on seals or other stone objects, the extensions of writing from tablets to other media involved a transfer of skills and knowledge between artisans³⁷ and across media. This kind of transference is neither simple nor automatic, as has been demonstrated in the work of archaeologists who have

³² For example, among the seals from the Royal Cemetery of Ur: U. 8615, U. 10823, U. 10872 (Woolley 1934, pls. 193:18, 194:27, 29), and in the Diyala: #320, #335 (Frankfort 1955, pls. 32, 33).

³³ See, for example, Boese 1971, Tafel XVII.1, XVIII.1, XXIX.1, 2.

³⁴ Winter 1985.

³⁵ Cylinder seals made of shell are relatively common in the ED III period; they occasionally bore inscriptions.

³⁶ Taylor 2011, 19; Taylor/Cartwright 2011, 310–313.

³⁷ I include scribes under the category of artisans, as they likely shaped their own tablets, even if they did not engage in the full range of activities involved in tablet production. See Taylor/Cartwright 2011, Whitehouse 2013.

explored cross-craft interactions.³⁸ In the case of writing, either the scribe was confronted with new materials, requiring new tools and bodily gestures, or a new group of people—cylinder seal cutters—had to learn to reproduce written signs, although not necessarily to write in the sense of acquiring active literacy. This latter option may have opened up a new form of partial literacy (see below) and would involve delegation of a portion of the task of writing to a group of artisans who had not previously been involved with it.

5 From the Medium to the Message³⁹

Unbaked clay tablets may in some cases have been recycled, given the fact that tablet clay was typically finely levigated and would have required a considerable amount of time and effort in preparation; nonetheless, a careful consideration of potential cases and methods of reusing clay tablets suggests that the practice of recycling was more limited than one might think.⁴⁰ On the other hand, tablets might simply be discarded, as suggested by the find-spots of the Uruk Archaic Texts, which were part of the rubble used to level the Eanna precinct in preparation for further building activities. How long after their production this occurred is an open question,⁴¹ but their content hints that most were meant as short-term accounting records. Only in rare circumstances were clay tablets baked,⁴² providing another testimony to the short-lived nature, relatively speaking, of the recorded information.

With the incorporation of stone as a writing medium in later Early Dynastic times, not just the medium changes but also the message. The use of stone involved an increasing permanence of that which was written in comparison to a clay tablet.

Stone requires no transformation to be durable on a “permanent” basis;⁴³ indeed, unlike metals or clay, the only rapid way to transform stone is subtractive. Rather than requiring care to preserve (for example, not exposing clay tablets to water), it needs effort to destroy stone, by chiseling, hammering, or chipping parts away. In this respect writing on stone brings with it intrinsic claims to duration of the inscribed text—as well as that which was shaped and depicted—that writing on a clay tablet

³⁸ See in particular Brysbaert 2008, 2011.

³⁹ McLuhan 1964.

⁴⁰ Taylor/Cartwright 2011.

⁴¹ See Nissen 2002, 6–7.

⁴² Taylor/Cartwright 2011, 300.

⁴³ There is, of course, no truly permanent, in the sense of fully unalterable material, but stone that is not exposed to constant water flow or other highly erosive processes undergoes only minor changes over long periods of time in comparison to many other commonly used materials in antiquity, such as clay, bone, and other organic substances.

does not.⁴⁴ To take just one example, it is hardly surprising that statuary of a king or royal stelae, such as the Stele of the Vultures, that name kings and recount their deeds were made of stone, emphasizing their long-lasting characteristics, rather than of clay. This was not only a matter of the “costliness” of stone, especially of the kinds that were not locally available within the alluvial lowlands, but also of the characteristics of a material that required particular kinds of artisanal skills to create, had a certain aesthetic value, and exuded a permanence that could not be claimed for clay.⁴⁵

The use of stone as a medium for writing brought not only greater permanence but was also accompanied by a change in *what* was written, both on stone and on clay. Whereas earlier tablets consisted primarily of short-term accounts, by ED III times there is a proliferation of new genres: temple hymns, wisdom texts (such as “Instructions of Shuruppak”), proverbs, incantations, and narrative texts (such as “Lugalbanda and Ninsun”).⁴⁶ This was an extension of writing beyond the sphere of the almost purely economic and the realm of accounting to one of ritual and related knowledge. By writing it down, this knowledge was preserved for the future in a form that was more fixed than in oral transmission, an important step in the transition from what Assmann has referred to as communicative to cultural memory.⁴⁷ Again it is surely no coincidence that it is in the mid-third millennium that there are the first clear indications of the archiving of (some) tablets. There is also a clear development in terms of inscriptions on stone cylinder seals. Early Dynastic seal inscriptions usually consist of a name, alone or with the addition of a title or profession. These attributes were presumably intended to be stable over a relatively long period of time, in many cases a (working) lifetime. Interestingly, the inscriptions point to a personalization of the seals: there are to my knowledge none that have titles or professions *without* a personal name.⁴⁸ This stands in contrast to Nissen’s hypothesis for the Late Uruk period⁴⁹ in which he proposes that some seals were meant to designate offices rather than specific holders of those positions.

In Sargonic and later times, seal inscriptions occur more frequently and often incorporate patronymics as well as the patron—an official or deity—and bearer of the seal, again relationships that had pretensions to being long-lasting, regardless of whether or not they were so in fact. In addition to the increasing number of inscribed examples, seals also appear more often in graves beginning in ED III times but espe-

⁴⁴ One can, of course, see this as part of a longer-term process, in which writing on clay made that which was written much longer-lasting than it was prior to the existence of such a recording technology.

⁴⁵ Even when baked, ceramic objects are more easily breakable than stone.

⁴⁶ Biggs 1974, 28–32, 79–97; Krebern timer 1998, 317–325; Krebern timer/Postgate 2009.

⁴⁷ Assmann 1997.

⁴⁸ Woolley 1934; Jacobsen in Frankfort 1955.

⁴⁹ Nissen 1977.

cially from the Sargonic period.⁵⁰ Again, this may be understood as an increasing tendency to associate a specific person with a particular seal, which was then supposed to accompany her/him into death.

Other inscribed stone objects show related patterns. Stone plaques carved in low relief, often referred to as votive plaques, may include personal names and professions, dedicatory inscriptions to a deity, as well as reports of building activities.⁵¹ Stelae and sculpture include names and dedications as well as land claims and commemorations of military victories.

All of these inscriptions in stone can be understood as gestures toward a future that went beyond that of writing on clay tablets. In this respect, the material (stone), the visual and the written contents worked hand-in-hand. Objects such as stelae and sculpture may have been intended to stand in the temple or in a public place; in the case of seals, they might be taken with a person to the grave.⁵² In contrast, clay tablets were neither put on public display nor are they found in graves. The gesture toward the future, characterized by writing on stone, can be connected to Reinhard Koselleck's notion that an orientation toward the future entails expectations, an *Erwartungshorizont*, that is not solely based on prior experience (*Erfahrungsraum*).⁵³ While Koselleck considers this kind of openness to an unpredictable future to be an invention of modernity, I would argue that one can discern tendencies in that direction at other points in history, such as in the one of concern here.

6 Mechanical Reproduction

Cylinder seals have another characteristic that plays a role here as well. As has also been noted by other observers,⁵⁴ the scenes carved into them can be reproduced more or less *ad infinitum*—they are in some ways the ancient equivalent of the mechanical reproduction that both interested and worried Walter Benjamin in the early 20th century.⁵⁵ Moreover, by rolling a seal over a medium such as moist clay, it was possible for a seal bearer to produce something written without actually being able to write. If writing in contexts where few people were literate conferred a sense of power, this ability to create something written simply through the rolling of a seal would have been no small matter. An object, potentially inscribed by a non-literate seal cutter,

⁵⁰ See especially the Royal Cemetery of Ur (Woolley 1934) and graves in the Diyala region (Delougaz/Hill/Lloyd 1967).

⁵¹ Boese 1971.

⁵² In pre-ED II/III times seals were only very occasionally included as grave goods.

⁵³ Koselleck 1985.

⁵⁴ Charvát 2005, 282–283.

⁵⁵ Benjamin 1963; Pollock (in press).

was used by a potentially non-literate official to “write”, thereby transforming a person into what one might argue to be a kind of pseudo-literate subject.

One can add nuance to this picture by hypothesizing a differential distribution of active and passive literacy, with active literacy referring to the ability to write and passive literacy to the capacity to read.⁵⁶ Seals, whether they bear inscriptions or not, function as a kind of mould for creating serial products, the sealings.⁵⁷ If one had use of a seal, whether as an individual or in the capacity of an officeholder, this was the equivalent of being in possession of a prototype used in reproduction of the imagery carved into the seal. In the case of inscribed seals, the prototype allowed the person with the seal to produce something written, regardless of whether she or he was in fact actively literate. It is possible that the inscriptions on the serial products (sealings), which were more widely distributed than the prototype (seals), could be read by a larger group of people whose passive literacy skills were adequate to recognize some basic sign combinations. Although this must remain a matter of conjecture, this thought experiment points to specific potentials for the ways that interactions between things and people may have produced kinds of subjects whose skills and social positioning were thereby newly defined.

7 Conclusion

I have tried to show some of the ways in which the incorporation of multiple materials and skills into objects were the products of relationships between people and things and in turn had consequences for those relationships. The use of stone as a new and highly durable medium for writing brought with it and/or was prompted by a number of significant changes: (1) the skills required for the act of writing had to be adapted, and some degree of cross-craft interaction was likely essential at least at the beginning; (2) inscriptions took on a degree of permanence that up until that time does not seem to have been of much importance; and (3) with the use of more permanent materials came a change in that which was written, both on stone and on clay: one might hazard the suggestion that it was the material that changed the content, rather than the other way around.⁵⁸

As Daniel Miller has noted with reference to the work of Erving Goffman, the less we are aware of objects, the more powerful they are: they determine our expectations and set the scene, but when we are unaware of this, the process is not open to chal-

⁵⁶ Brooks 2010.

⁵⁷ It is, of course, the case that seals may also have been prized as elements of bodily adornment, for example, in addition to being used to impress sealings.

⁵⁸ McLuhan 1964.

lenge.⁵⁹ This, I would suggest, offers a potential place for positive intervention: by raising awareness, we can reopen doxic situations to questioning and thereby address the ways in which the material worlds we contribute to making subjectivize us.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the organizers for their invitation to participate in the conference “Materiality of writing in 3rd millennium Mesopotamia”. Reinhard Bernbeck and an anonymous reviewer offered helpful comments on a previous version of the paper.

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⁵⁹ Miller 2005, 4–5.

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